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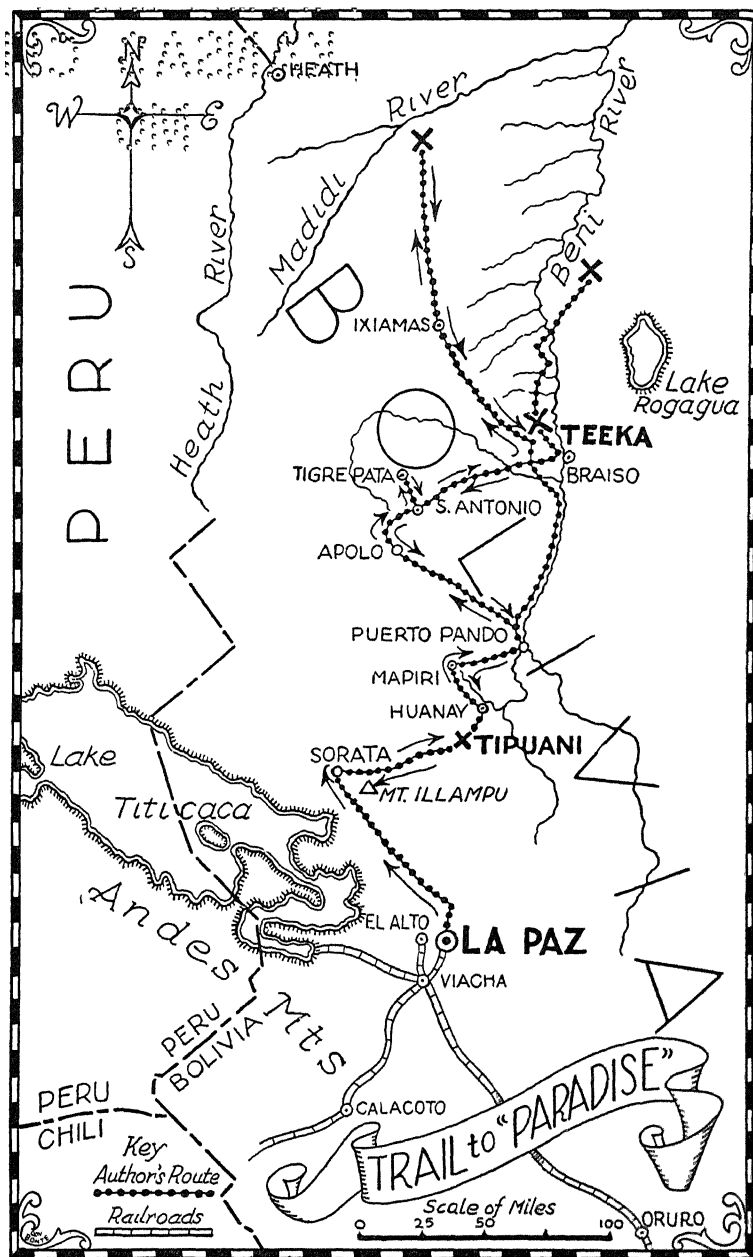
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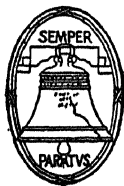
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THUNDER BEATS THE DRUM!



THUNDER BEATS THE DRUM!

By
JOHN HEWLETT



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THUNDER BEATS THE DRUM!

I.

Thunder Beats the Drum!

FAWCETT HAD ALWAYS INTERESTED ME. I FIRST HEARD of him one night in a New York newspaper office. I remember the story.

In 1928, whenever the moon was full over the Mediterranean, inshore fishermen often pointed to the shadowy figure of a woman pacing back and forth upon the terrace of a little villa at Beaulieu-sur-Mer. Later, when all the world was proclaiming Colonel Percy Harrison Fawcett dead of curare barbs in the jungles of Brazil, the mystery of the woman keeping this vigil was lifted—in a United Press dispatch from Nice. She was Nina Fawcett, wife or widow of the greatest explorer of his day, who picked full-moon nights to commune via the channels of telepathy with a living Fawcett, supposedly happy and unharmed in a Garden of Eden on the banks of the Trapajos far away.

It was this dispatch out of France on September 13, 1928, which came literally under my nose at a rewrite desk just at a time when the impulse to be on the move was getting the upper hand of me, that first stirred my interest in Fawcett. A highly romantic Englishman had

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been swallowed up in the world's wild greenhouse, whither he had plunged, presumably to prove that life did not begin in the Valley of the Euphrates, but originated in a lost world near the shores of the Xingu in Brazil. It had a highly intriguing ring to it.

A correspondent of the United Press at Nice quoted Nina Fawcett as saying: "At night, when the moon is full, I enter into telepathic communication with Colonel Fawcett on the terrace of my villa, and I have received personal reassurance that he is alive."

Nina Fawcett was not the only one in those days and even later who voiced unswerving opinions that this challenger of the jungle was still alive. In spite of the assertions of another explorer who braved the hell of the Matto Grosso in a futile effort to locate him, many steadfastly asserted faith in the theory that the heroic Fawcett survived.

George Dyott, the explorer who in 1928 led an expedition to search for the lost British scientist, turned back after months of peril-packed adventures when his little party was surrounded by hostile Indians on the banks of the Xingu. There, Dyott said, Fawcett and his party were slain by unfriendly natives.

But Dyott brought back from Brazil no proof of this except local jungle gossip. Since then, every now and again, during all these years, news trickled out of the empire of the blowgun to confound the theory of the Dyott expedition. There was a story from missionaries of a strange, white, blue-eyed baby near the head waters of the Xingu, and hints that Ralph, nicknamed "Jack,"

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Fawcett, twenty-one-year-old son of the explorer, had found romance with a dusky belle in the jungle.

There was another report from a Brazilian engineer via Lima, Peru, that Colonel Fawcett, his son and Raleigh Rimmel of Los Angeles, an eighteen-year-old Oxford student who had accompanied the expedition, were living near Theodore Roosevelt's River of Doubt, cultivating the soil with advanced agricultural methods.

Rumors flew thick and fast in 1928 that Fawcett had been captured by a tribe of white Indians in a lost city, and planned to spend his declining years learning the history of their secret civilization.

A Bolivian rubber scout, staggering out of the furnace of Matto Grosso, found his way to Pará, and told of seeing Colonel Fawcett alive, suffering from paludism and acting like a man who had lost his mind. Millions of mosquitoes and microscopic flies covered Fawcett's bare flesh, the Bolivian said, but Fawcett made no effort to brush them off, and stared fixedly into space.

Fawcett, who had had more than eighteen years' experience in South American jungles, made his last plunge into the Brazilian wastes in 1925, accompanied by his son and young Rimmel. He was commissioned by the Royal Geographical Society to penetrate the horror-packed provinces of insect and fever and probe the mysteries of what human life survived under such adverse conditions. Shortly after the expedition left Rio it was swallowed up in the limitless stretches of the unknown wastes of pin-point porvin, alligators, paludal fever and killer Indians. His disappearance created a controversy

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which raged as violently as any theory he himself ever propounded on the origin of man.

He must have been a striking individual. In his late years, he looked something like the familiar pictures of Buffalo Bill. His hair and beard he let grow long when he left civilization behind him. He wore knee-high leather boots and carried a long automatic rifle on his back in a holster, secured by a strap over his right shoulder. He wore a cotton khaki perspiration muffler around his neck, army field trousers of World War I vintage, and binoculars fixed to a wide leather belt in which were two knives. Those who saw him in the jungle on rainy days looked upon the strange, commanding figure and half expected to see him open an umbrella.

Fawcett was about five feet eleven inches tall and was developing a respectable paunch when he disappeared: he dwarfed the macho which he rode out into the unknown of the Matto Grosso. Otherwise, he and his little mule must have been singularly reminiscent of Don Quixote.

Fawcett was quick, alert and eager. He loved best to lose himself in a dream world he was forever conjuring up. He was eternally the little boy, playing cops and robbers, riding a magic carpet over fairylands of candy mosques, or sailing away to fight for Captain Kidd on the Spanish Main.

That Fawcett was a brave man history leaves no doubt. He won the D.S.O. in the first World War. He courageously led expeditions in Morocco.

In 1910, he had mapped the boundary of Bolivia and

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Brazil for the Bolivian Government, and for his paper on this labor won the Royal Geographical Society's Founder's Medal. If he is alive this day in 1944, Fawcett is seventy-seven years old.

Here was a man who believed in great buried cities. When far away in jungle lands he would espy high rock cliffs upon which played tropical sun; he was sure that upon the horizon he had seen a city of jewels sparkling under the equator's burning skies.

But whatever his wife or widow, or the armchair jungle theorists, romanticists, explorers or ethnologists thought about his life or death, one contradictory theory persisted that Fawcett, dead or alive, was in Bolivia, not Brazil. The contention was that Fawcett loved Bolivia too much to stay away very long. No one knew whether he headed a course to the Madidi River in Bolivia, lived or died on the Xingu, found a resplendent paradise and settled there, or was struck down by disease or poisoned barbs.

To find the answer to this question was a half-baked notion in my mind. Dyott had failed to follow the trail to Bolivia. Perhaps there was a back door to this hidden paradise through the little-known wilds that led to this amazing nation. It was an exciting idea. And there was gold in Bolivia too.

From the moment I read the U.P. dispatch, Bolivia had a pull for me, but I did nothing about it except fight it. This was not easy. The more I learned about Fawcett, the more I wanted to find him. As Bolivia unfolded through encyclopedia and source book, more compell-

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ing became the urge to look in on it personally, to assail the realm of Churoquella, the thunder god, and Patino, the tin god, and peccary teeth which cure boils and goiters.

But I literally ran away from Bolivia. Instead of journeying southward, I sailed across the Western Ocean, in the opposite direction, traveled in France, worked in London, Brussels, Berlin, Antwerp and Rotterdam. Year after year I struggled subconsciously against the gravity of the high, land-locked nation, fought a nagging compulsion. Finally, I thought I had it licked.

But once, when it was springtime in Germany, the old yearning swept over me again, suddenly, one afternoon as I strolled on Unter den Linden. This time it was too much! Impulsively, I hurried to the Adlon Hotel, a new man. I had made up my mind definitely, at last. Next day the *Europa* was to sail from Bremerhaven. As I packed bags the porter did his job well. I made the boat train and in a matter of hours was aboard the fast ship, bound for Bolivia via New York.

If one is ever completely happy I think I was then—until I remembered I had not resigned my job. I wirelessed my boss cryptically a message which may have him puzzled to this day. I remember the text. It went like this:

“It’s Fawcett and gold and derby-hatted Cholo girls for me. Thanks for everything.”

When, two months later, I leaned on the rail of the little Norwegian freighter *Tercero* and watched the lights of Montevideo dancing and sliding on the murky waters of the Plate, I had no idea of what lay before me

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and no desire to think of what lay behind. On board ship I had had forty-five days pretty much to myself in which to think and plan. The stillness and glory of the myriad-starred tropic nights, with all the brilliant, breath-taking evidence of the nearness of the firmament and the immensity of the universe, had indeed promoted deep, long thoughts. But for the life of me I could not tell you one. At night, I lay on my patch of deck, and looking into infinity, felt stirred by profound conjecture. But those thoughts that seem at birth so fraught with import are strangely perishable. I approached Buenos Aires with as indeterminate a mind as had shifted restively in my head when I watched the Statue of Liberty slide behind Governors Island. I might find gold. I might find Fawcett.

In Buenos Aires, I first heard about Tom Donegal. He had been a guide for Fawcett on his earlier expeditions in Bolivia. He was, I was told, a little one-eyed Irishman, probably seventy years old, but still stronger than a macho, and the one white man who really knew the Beni land, that remote and undesirable territory beyond which lies one of the few spots on the globe still marked "unexplored" on maps, and which may be standing guard over the true Garden of Eden. Tom made frequent pilgrimages into this grim spot, and returned always weighed down with gold. La Paz was his home base, and there, if anywhere, I would find him.

Here was a big step toward Fawcett. Here, too, was the lure of gold again. Tom was definitely my man. Sing ho for La Paz!

2.

La Paz

LA PAZ IS THE CAPITAL OF SOROCHE AND THE HOME OF racing hearts, of hungry lungs, thin air, lingering colds, streets in great confusion, a higgledy-piggledy citadel contradicting order and threatening sanity. Soroché is the sickness of the heights. Lowlanders find it terrifying and stupefying. Some feel it at the two-mile level of La Paz. The effect is mentally depressing, and many visitors find it so distressing to their nervous systems that they feel they are losing their minds and flee the terror via autocarrill, breathing from oxygen tanks, to sea-level Arica, in Chile.

These stampeded visitors will never return to Bolivia again, but those who stick it out are soon partially acclimatized and can remain with reasonable mental clarity unless stricken with bronchial disorders, for which there is no hope of cure in the heights. Lowlanders dread the first warning snuffle in La Paz as much as does the vicuña the footfall of a deadly Aymara hunter in the Cordillera crags. For, once the victim is smitten with even the common cold in this capital of the only Indian republican nation, his life, if he lives it, is plagued by remarkable

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torture which only sea-level convalescence will relieve.

A fast descent via autocarrill to Arica is invariably indicated for pneumonia patients, and rare is the recovery when oxygen and lowlands are not both employed.

To tell of La Paz one must deal at length with soroche. Indians have long called it *veta*, which means vein. They had the word of medicine men handed down from the Inca for centuries that this elevation illness was caused by poisonous, invisible gases surging from veins of metal in the mountain land.

Whatever the cause, the results are always the same, and in varying degrees of intensity the sufferer will bleed at the nose, sometimes at the eyes, and retch or vomit. Cold hands and feet are warning symptoms. Roaring sensations in the ears, swollen blood vessels in the head accompany the attack. When it is over, the sufferer for days feels melancholy and distraught.

On approaching La Paz from the altiplano, the first-time visitor sees a green and terracotta tiled city built in the bowels of what at first he believes an enormous dormant crater. The metropolis actually lies in a great eroded valley cut out by the waters of the Choqueyapu River, whose authority over soil and stone has made her somewhat of a Queen of Erosion.

White giants of the Andes frame the horizon of La Paz and tower over the capital of dizzy heights. The altitude of the altiplano is 13,208 feet above sea level. Down sheer precipices formed by the Choqueyapu is an amphitheater like never-never land. La Paz exists in breathlessness 12,786 feet higher than the Pacific which

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laps to the west on Chile's shores. But the giants themselves shoot to the heavens incredibly in a world where altitude is not respected unless it provides a ladder to the skies.

La Paz is not only the capital, however illegally, of Bolivia, she is the stepping stone to the stratosphere. The "giants" are gleaming Illimani, the snow-clad triplets of Huainapotosi, and formidable old cone-shaped Mururata, which disdainfully overtop foothills which would dwarf the Rockies. Imaginative wanderers, first viewing the mountains of Challacayo and Hampaturi towering more than 11,000 feet even above lofty La Paz, have felt the awful sensation that they were gazing upon giant hitch-hikers trying to thumb a ride to paradise on the racing, unreal clouds.

But there is little of paradise in any part of Bolivia's 419,470 square miles. She has been ruled by greed and her history coursed by bitterness, wars, suicides of officials, assassinations and revolutions. Her boundaries have been the scenes of battles and controversies with every neighbor on the north, on the south, on the east and on the west.

Bolivia's history is packed bulgingly with records of friction on her frontiers, intrigue and bloodshed in her towns and cities, and of these La Paz has seen more action than all the others. Many clashes have littered her plazas with the dead, have stained her hilly, cobblestoned streets and public buildings with the blood of men and women, red and brown and white, which is to say, Indian, Cholo and Spaniard. And all of these have red blood—all of

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these will fight. But Bolivia has never won a war since she became a nation. She lost her outlet to the sea to Chile; and by Peru, Brazil, Argentina and Paraguay she has been pushed back or held back and squeezed into land-locked constriction.

La Paz is the capital of a nation of Indians and half-breeds, with a population of 3,457,000 aboriginal, cholo and other mestizo souls intermingled with a proud and deprecating minority of semi-pure Spanish semi-masters. The political life of the country is as contradictory as the fact that it has two capitals—one, La Paz, the actual, the other Sucre, the legal.

The rivalry between Sucre and La Paz has caused revolution and downfall of important men, including presidents of the republic. But because of the important geographical location of La Paz in the north and the influence of Sucre sentimentalists down Chaco way, both cities are starred on your maps in familiar Latin compromise. One star has saved the face of Sucre, but the other designates the metropolis under Illimani's shadow as the real and undisputed seat of political and economic functions of the Indian nation.

La Paz is populated by a quarter of a million bronze-skinned inhabitants who will minimize soroche and its effects, but the visitor will see that even these natives walk with slow and measured strides on the crooked, pebbled streets of their home town. /

The girls of pleasure of La Paz live on steep side streets, and make original use of an age-old lure. They have, in fact, perfected the art of solicitation, without

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having to lift an eyebrow, drop a handkerchief, or even waste a smile.

Only in La Paz, I think, is the electric fan used as a red light. It faces and blows over a tiny heater in which boils expensive Parisian perfume, wafting seductive odors into the streets. It's a cousin to the old Western bar with bourbon sprinkled in the sawdust. You may knock freely on these doors. Some men find their favorite houses in the dark, even when very drunk, because each uses a different scent. The proprietresses have a definite business arrangement on this matter, and it is kept religiously. Otherwise, there would be too many complications in the night life of the high Andean capital. At 12,786 feet above sea level, hair-pulling takes a lot out of a girl. They stick carefully to brand names, and have learned not to experiment with their perfumes. It is their trade-mark, slogan and advertising copy rolled into one, and the local copyright laws are strictly enforced.

Old-timers in La Paz are saddened by the appearance of modernistic and semi-futuristic apartment houses and residences which today are springing up in the midst of adobe near the Plaza Isabel la Catolica. There many stone and concrete structures, employing the colors of the spectrum and multi-hues in ceramics, are built along lines suggestive of the architecture of the Kurfurstendamm, or even the hysteria of Hollywood, and reflect the Bolivian admiration for the German people.

The leaning toward Germany in Bolivia is deeply rooted. Many of the doctors in La Paz were educated in

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Berlin. Its army was thoroughly German-trained by General Hans Kundt, a Kaiser warrior, and the recent president-dictator, Germán Busch, who committed suicide one morning after a morbid night of heavy drinking, was the son of a first-generation German who married a Bolivian. The late degenerate Hitler colleague, Captain Ernst Roehm, taught Bolivian soldiers the goose step.

Other incongruous contrivances, like the twin-motored passenger planes which bite into the cold, thin air of the altiplano, land on extra long runways and frighten the llamas and flabbergast the donkey-riding people, are harbingers of other changes which soon will come. But to see the plane invading the province of the condor and Hollywood touches cropping out on the capital's hills in architecture with curving lines and movie-set angles like a nightmare of Nemo set down in ancient, respectable squalor, is as shocking to the reactionary as macadam ribbons which make thoroughfares parallel with streets pebble-cobbled from the Choqueyapu.

Bolivia is an incubator of revolution and La Paz is the hatchery of its conflicts. Women who squat on the flagstones in front of cathedrals and public buildings selling their wares of silver ornaments, eggs, bitter frozen potatoes, vicuña skins, armadillo shells, the nauseous mixtures of saliva and alcohol, and other products of the cloud land, know too well the sound of machine-gun fire in the plazas. They scatter and scurry to safety with the first sharp rattling of the weapons, which echoes resoundingly against the surrounding precipice walls of

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the city like the exhaust of motorcycles in a motordrome. They are joined by all other unarmed citizens who have not taken sides, rushing to neutral homes and business houses to be barricaded behind heavy bullet-resistant doors and huddle for a while in terror until the killing is over.

The Indians, Quechuas and Aymaras clear out with the first sign of conflict, for these subject citizens of Bolivia are strangely apathetic to the leadership of the country. One master, they know with bitter rankling, will do as little as another to relieve their desperate plight. Others, accompanied by their entire families, flee to the quaint resort center of Obrajes, several hundred meters lower than the capital, where they hide behind weeping-willow trees or in clumps of pampas grass growing on the banks of the Choqueyapu River. When a phone call to one of the little inns in the equable village flashes the news that Bolivia has a new president or dictator, the refugees straggle home to the city—afoot, in cart, car, astride donkey, or pickaback.

Wars and revolutions have always made Bolivia one of the poorest of nations. But the latest war, outside of its borders this time, promised to prove a boon of the first magnitude.

With the outbreak of World War II, it seemed entirely possible that Bolivia was about to enjoy her greatest economic boom; that the urgent demand for more and more tin to fight the Axis would make this awkwardly-placed nation the envy of all others in South America; that with pocket change alone all of her streets

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could be macadamized, and U.S. dollars would pay the bill. But, as usual with Bolivia, dizzy political events, intrigue, sabotage, treason, old hates, misguided "patriotism" and greed plunged the republic again into turmoil.

When Bolivia, under her president, General Enrique Peñaranda and her first Ambassador to the United States, Dr. Luis Fernando Guachalia, decided to declare war on the enemies of the big *Yanqui* Goliath to the north, she went all-out in a surprisingly sudden anti-Axis outburst which took on all comers. Unlike other South American countries, which only broke off diplomatic relations with Germany, Italy and Japan or declared actual war on Germany and Italy alone, Bolivia pulled not a single punch. Bolivia bravely included every enemy of the United States in her declaration of war, thumbing her nose at the Japanese as contemptuously as at the far-away Germans and Italians. This was a pro-U.S. gesture which made worldly-wise diplomats blink in some astonishment.

For a long time Uncle Sam did some blinking himself, not to say wrinkling a worried brow, as he peered anxiously toward the confused situation in the Indian republican nation. He saw that the Southern Cross was only a constellation in most southern skies, but that it changed into something closely resembling a crooked cross in the Andean skies over Bolivia.

There are many who have said that Bolivia in reality declared a phony war on every last one of the enemies of the United Nations strictly for the most sinister and

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selfish reasons, but this is a matter history will have to decide along with the merits of other seemingly strange antics. These include, among other things, too many military coups to enumerate.

The latest one, as this is written, is that which added the name Penaranda to the long list of the country's ex-Presidents and consigned his nine former cabinet ministers, his prefects, sub-prefects, corregidores and alcaldes who followed him to war and stuck with him when it became unpopular, to obscurity or to the grave. How many were killed in the bloody mess which followed the change of heart, Bolivia is not telling. Neither how many went to the lousy, cockroach-ridden jails of La Paz, Oruro, Cochabamba, Santa Cruz, Sucre and Potosi.

A pre-dawn coup on December 20, 1943, signaled by a bespectacled social worker named Victor Paz Estenssoro, gave Bolivia a new revolution about which there was not any fooling. This was no comic-opera, Richard Harding Davis, banana-republic uprising. The streets of the capital were spattered with blood in a four-hour battle, and once again the historians of Bolivia needed an adding machine to get the correct total of Presidential "ins" and "outs." They are still keeping it handy for future developments.

Estenssoro took immediate power after his machine-gunners had wiped out all opposition, and appointed Gaullberto Villaroel as new president of the republic. All pro-Axis allegations were vociferously denied. Bolivia, said Estenssoro and Villaroel, would continue at war with the enemies of their predecessors.

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Sixty, seventy or eighty revolutions—it's all the same to Bolivia, so not too many persons were surprised by the new coup so much as by the original declaration of war on Germany: Germans have been traditionally admired by Bolivian men, married by Bolivian women and appreciated by the Bolivian people as a whole far more than have the nationals of any other country.

So, while Bolivia is still at war with the Axis and Japan, just how "technical" this state of belligerency may be is another matter. The United States did not like what went on, said so bluntly. So did England. Anything can happen in time of war, and if the historians get the adding machine out again and oil it up to make a new total, no one would be surprised. The United States and England refused to recognize the new junta for six months, then suddenly okayed it.

Tin has always caused this sort of addition in Bolivia, and Bolivia today is the most important single source of this metal under present world conditions.

Bolivians fear revolutions only second to epidemics. In one of the most notable epidemics a few years ago, six-skirted Cholo girls and filthy poor died endlessly. Many grave diggers, even as during Europe's great black plague, fell so quickly that they were interred in holes their own labor had intended for paying customers they knew would come. Hearses and corpse wagons rolled to the graves around the clock.

Mysterious typhus exantematica hit hard and fast. Red splotches covered the victim of infected lice bites; and physicians, prescribing only clear soup and rest, stood

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by helplessly fussing with stethoscope and pulse, awaiting death they knew was not far away. Priests, red-eyed, and tearful nuns labored over the dying and the dead. Cathedral bells interminably tolled the knell of passing life. Panic gripped high La Paz.

The presence of wholesale death filled the churches, and there, as rich and poor alike kneeled together in prayer to escape the common plague, the lice jumped from burlap rags to broadcloth. The plague spread to high places, for blood is blood to Bolivian lice, who drink it blue and drink it red, and this year their thirst drained the land.

Undertakers, grave diggers and the plaza beggars who worked the cathedral steps after masses and on the Sabbath Day, gained real profit from the plague. The rich, who rarely looked the beggars' way, rushed to greasy hats and boxes to toss generously panic alms to woo some lucky god of hunchback-terror offerings to hear from the lips of whining mendicants one hopeful phrase: "*Buena suerte!*" The great leveler was working exceedingly well.

Normal business slumped for days as the Andean metropolis was plunged into mourning and despair. That part of the populace which did not throng the houses of God, packed saloons to drink and for a moment forget the specter of a louse.

But one day the visitation ended as suddenly as it came. Men soon forgot their fears. Temporal goals were revived again. The impact set the beggars back on their heels. The flow of alms dwindled to a miserable trickle,

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and mendicants prayed for the plague to return. Proud broadcloth brushed again past burlap rags, the nine-day glory faded, and again they were forgotten men.

The beggars' whines grew loud in the Plaza des Armas.

And on one Sabbath Day as the cathedral spilled after noon mass, home-going worshipers heard a gnarled and twisted old man pleading for alms.

"Pity!" he cried. "*Pity, por le Madre de Dios!*"

He stretched out both his withered hands, and in one was a matchbox. "Pity!" he wailed. "*Pity por Dios y suerte!*"

But neither God nor luck brought a copper to the shrunken palm.

Suddenly he snapped the matchbox open—it was packed with healthy, kicking gray lice, carefully combed from the heads of a dozen beggars and thieves—and he scattered the contents over the crowd. Men and women screamed, and scratched and scattered. Less timorous onlookers grasped the wretched old beggar and hustled him off to jail.

There was no wailing in the square on the following Sabbath Day. Each beggar who solicited a few poor coins also held out a matchbox with his other hand. Business was very good, thank you! Police seized several of the extortioners, but always their matchboxes were empty. Still, one never knows—and do not the people of La Paz like to keep their beggars happy?

3.

Tom and Chita

THE PARTS OF BOLIVIA WHICH ARE NOT SITUATED IN FORBIDDING altitude lie in steaming green jungle which few Bolivians know. These parts are ruled by savage red men known best to one white adventurer who had probed the secrets of their daily lives, who knew their customs and their trails on the Rio Kaka, the Madidi and the Rio Madre de Dios. This was the man I sought to carry me into the wilderness beyond the Cordillera range. When I finally found old Tom Donegal in the Hamburgo Hotel in La Paz, the lives of many persons were scheduled for change, and I had come a long way from the City Room of a Press Association in Park Row, New York, where I first started thinking of Fawcett.

Tom's Spanish was early bastard. He spoke it in high pitch, colorfully, with *carajo's*, *carramba's*, *cabrone's*—sentences into which no verb ever intruded. His waking hours were peppery, ungrammatical and profane. His nightmares were horrors of pidgin.

He was certainly a little Irishman. He stood five feet two inches. His left eye was gone—blasted away by a

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mine explosion in Colombia. The empty socket, patchless, was not too appealing, and not always sanitary. He squinted with his good eye, making his nose wrinkle. His hair was white; his close-cropped mustache was salt and pepper. His face was leathery, and permanently seamed. His brow was full of lines, like an old woman's palm, and the ambition bumps had collapsed with age.

Tom walked with a sailor's gait, and his legs had the spring and snap of thirty. He wore cheap khaki trousers and gray woolen shirts open at the neck. His only sartorial magnificence was a crowning glory—he spent fortunes on Stetson hats. He bought one every month in La Paz, the more expensive the better. Salesmen found him a delight, for he paid at least \$40 for each. The wide brims made him look ridiculously top heavy, and from a few yards away he looked like a toadstool.

The old man drank gallons of beer to chase pure cane alcohol imported from Neuvas, Cuba. Every day he spent in Bolivia's capital he was in a varying state of intoxication for the twenty-four hours. He slept in a stable of adobe covered with tiles appropriated for his home in La Paz. His bed was a U.S. army blanket spread over coarse straw on a concrete floor. For sanitary purposes in a room devoid of plumbing, he had constructed a trough of planks in V shape, one end of which he nailed to the window sill, and the other he rested on the sidewalk outside. The frequency and profusion with which the effectiveness of this device was demonstrated was, to his neighbors, a source of astonishment and admiration. After all, Tom was a little man.

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His room was piled high with empty beer and alcohol bottles which had grown mountainously through the years. Spiders had safe homes in the welter. Tom's women slept in the stable nightly, but only one had ever been known to try to sweep. Her historic effort many years before had thrown the old man into such a tantrum that the offense was publicized. You don't have to draw a picture for a smart Bolivian girl. None of them ever tried to clean up again.

One of these girls was Chita. Chita was born in Chinchorro, Chile, in a boxcar on a railroad siding where her mother worked as cook for a construction gang. Her father saw the comely cook from a train window, fell off when she flashed a smile, and took the next train, the next day. He never came back, and never saw Chita, who was born promptly nine months after his excursion from the parlor car with Chita's healthy, twelve-year-old mother.

Chita told Tom her mother was sure of her father's identity—that he was a blond white man, and not the mestizo section foreman with whom she had been consorting over many miles of the Arica-Tacra division long before the Anglo-Saxon traveler decided to lay over in Chinchorro. Whenever her mother was doubtful, Chita explained, she renewed her confidence in the paternity of her daughter by rubbing a silver U.S. dollar the thoughtful man had tossed her way when he departed. Another thing, too, Chita said, her mother was good at counting on her fingers, and everything added up exactly, even to the number of days the section fore-

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man had been away laying new crossties near Hospicio, Peru.

Chita's coloring added testimony that her father was a white man. Her complexion was like new olive oil, in contrast to the shades of other little girls who recognized the section foreman as their true parent. Many of these, bearing a strong resemblance to the errant ferro-carrill boxcar resident lived in towns and villages scattered all over southern Peru and in Chile as far as Charana. Most Indian girls eagerly sought the privilege of bearing the section foreman dusky babies, because, after the engineers, he was one of the highest-paid railroad workers. Some day would be due for a pension. Meanwhile, it must be said in his behalf, he provided as much thin support for each of his illegitimate heirs as he could possibly make go around and still retain enough for himself to live a frugal life.

Chita explained one evening in La Paz that the section foreman had first claimed her as his own daughter. Chita said he seemed proud of her coloring and boasted that she was a throwback to some of his own white forebears. Later, when he discerned a certain Nordic strain taking form in the girl, the section foreman confronted her mother with the first doubts since Chita was born. He wrung from her the story of the silver dollar, U.S.A., and additional details sufficient to justify his darkest suspicions. That night he raped Chita and kicked the girl and her mother out of the boxcar for good.

That's how Chita, at ten, happened to go to Arica where the big cargo boats stopped; and where there are

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cargo boats sailors are around to spend their wages in the stalls along the water front. Chita's mother had the idea first, and Chita told us she never made any objection as long as the customer was a white man of any nationality. She felt superior to the other girls, and thought of herself as a love child of a grand white man. The fact that her father never came back to Chinchorro after he had missed his train never seemed to bother her at all.

"The way I figure it," she said, "he stayed all night with my mother. Most men left much sooner. Another thing, he gave her an American dollar, which is worth thirty-six pesos, and that's a lot of money.

"My mother must have loved him, too, because however badly she ever needed anything, she always kept the silver dollar and rubbed it between her fingers so often it was finally worn smooth. She never spent the dollar, and gave it to me when she died. That means that she loved him, too."

Chita exhibited the dollar as proof, and no one made any comment which might hurt her feelings. Somehow, you thought this was all Chita had in the world—that it was a sort of birth certificate, or proof of respectability. When she told the story you felt that if she lost the dollar she would lose everything, and that it was the kind of story that should have made the listener choke up a little. But no one did. It was hard to feel sorry for Chita in those days. She seemed the happiest girl in the world.

When Chita first went to work in the stalls of Arica, she was proud of her profession. Out of her first earn-

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ings she bought a glistening enamel pan and a large supply of bichloride tablets. Most of the girls kept on hand only cheap tin water buckets and never made trips to the drugstore, she said.

Chita had her little room painted a soft green and put fluffy pink curtains in the window. When she described the gay colors of the place, the pictures of Connecticut landscapes on the wall and the phonograph which always played American music, with "Blue Heaven" as the most favored, none of it sounded like sin at all. Chita thought these little touches good for business too.

Mostly, Chita was strictly impersonal with her guests, especially with the Dutch sailors, but a certain amount of enthusiasm crept in, she admitted, whenever Americans rapped on her door. She had a weakness for Yankis, and mates of the coastal liners still owe her for numerous favors. She finally was forced to buy a sign in the English language which warned that here was a cash house, strictly.

"The mates told too many of their friends," Chita explained simply. "It got so bad that sometimes customers with money had to wait in line. The sailors always asked for credit. It had to stop sometime."

Chita seemed a little hurt that none of those who owed her money ever came back when she announced the cash policy.

But these experiences failed to shake her faith in Americanos, even slightly. After all, she reasoned, she was as good as one herself. From things her mother told her, Chita thought her father came from Connecticut, which

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accounted for the rocky landscapes on the walls of her stall.

An oiler from the *Santa Barbara* gave her the record of "Blue Heaven" one night in lieu of cash. The only exception she made to the sign in her stall was for records, if they were of American music.

"They were as good as money to me," she stated. "The only Spanish record I'd take was "La Paloma." One night, a sailor tried to palm off a lot of Italian records on me and I called the police. They put him back aboard his ship from a launch and warned him not to come ashore in Arica again. Imagine!"

Chita's mother helped swell her earnings by soliciting for her daughter from a rowboat when cargo ships anchored in the harbor of Arica. By this time the mother was twenty-five years old, too ancient by sub-equatorial standards to pursue the profession in which Chita was a leader, but she could still do her bit. Daily or nightly, she would row to every vessel which put in, selling curios, little clay gods from Lake Titicaca, percussion instruments like the putucas or the guanaearas, and sometimes gaily colored ponchos. But the merchandise she preferred to sell were the favors of her daughter. She frequently made a flat rate to ferry a prospect to and from the landing, the fee, paid in advance, to include a visit to Chita's stall.

To avoid any chicanery, Chita's mother gave the customer a receipt which he passed on to Chita. This always bore nothing more than the date of the beloved American dollar. When some of the sailors caught on to

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the code, they used it to cheat, and the old woman was forced reluctantly to change it daily. The new receipts carried the title of an American record in Chita's cabinet, a new one for each day of the month. Later, they complicated the code even more effectively by adopting a certain record for a certain shipping company. For instance, Chita said, the Grace Line codes were of lyrical records only. Sailors from Chilean, Dutch, German and Norwegian ships were given slips of paper which bore the titles of symphonic disks. In this way, none of them could cheat.

Chita's mother rowed back and forth with amazing regularity, and Chita's income was the envy of the district. Catty competition later promoted the gossip that these rowing exertions were responsible for the mother's death. Chita disputed this violently in Tom's stable in La Paz. Her mother definitely died of pneumonia, she insisted. But whatever caused her mother's death indirectly led to Chita's trip to La Paz. She somehow felt that she might find her father here.

Her decision threw La Paz's white American male population into a semi-panic when she canvassed the city in her search. Many startled Americans, and occasionally an Englishman by mistake, were boldly stopped on the streets, or accosted by Chita in counting rooms with the naïve question: "Are you my father?" Some of the men who may have had doubts, or faulty memories, were known to have blushed violently.

Tom first met Chita when she approached him in front of the Hamburgo when her hopes of finding her

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father in Bolivia's capital were fading pitifully. She told him her story and he also learned that she was broke, and that night she moved into his stable as a non-paying guest until the old man could make up his mind what better to do. At first, he had planned to send her back to Arica, but later he decided it a crime to consign such a beauty to a fate so drab, and promised to take her into the jungle and make her a good woman if she would "reform."

Fervently, Chita vowed to change her ways. From this moment on she would reform. And in her own way she kept her word thenceforth.

4.

Recipe for Rooster

TOM SOMETIMES HELD COURT IN THE HAMBURGO HOTEL bar on the Murillo plaza in La Paz, where he regaled listeners with jungle tales before a red-hot, pot-bellied stove. He was the only man in Bolivia who knew the Beni country. He was the emperor of jungle trivia, the Caesar of Beni small talk, and god of useless information, as well as a king of vituperation. He knew his savage lands, and was reckless enough to penetrate them time and again. The Bolivians listened because they feared the jungle. He brought them stories of their own land which they were afraid to see.

The bar of the Hamburgo was as close as old Tom ever rubbed against respectability. He felt self-conscious even there. The swanky Hotel Paris down the square floored him completely. He had tried it once. Once was enough for him and for La Paz. It made quite a story, and was corroborated on all sides.

Tom had heard tell of de luxe adventures offered by first-class hotels—their suites, their baths, and linen upon soft beds—and often he had flirted with the idea of indulging himself in these alien and coddling things. His

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hands had never turned a faucet for his bath. When he washed, nature did the job. He plunged into^o currents formed by melting snow and ice from glaciers in the high altitudes, or took advantage of the rain. Tom liked the latter best of all. During the rainy season, he could often be seen lathering his naked body with strong lye soap as tropic sheets of water doused the lifeless suds and washed him clean. He ~~was~~ ^{was} under heaven's shower bath shouting in free delight like a ~~Rumi~~ ^{Rumi}, the Bolivian equivalent of North America's own Indian screamer, the Comanche.

Perfumed soap and hot water had never touched the old prospector's toughened skin. Thoughts of civilization's soft conventions terrified him. He resented them instinctively as the old-time wobbly hated and distrusted the celluloid collar of the office boss. But alcohol, which had always played an important part in his life, one night produced the inevitable abandon which gave him his first experience with a porcelain tub.

Tom came into La Paz from a gold-washing trip out where the Mosotenes live. He carried iodine bottles filled with gross gold worth ten thousand English pre-war pounds. He had sifted the heavy yellow stuff from sand where it had found bedrock a thousand years before when an earthquake changed a river's course and left a rapids high and dry. En route, down the winding road from the altiplano into La Paz, Tom drank and sang with truck-borne Cholos and made the decision to sign a hotel register for the first time in his life.

Tom was happy that night. First, because he was one

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of the richest men in the Indian nation. Second, he was sublimely exalted in the knowledge that he was drunker than he had ever been before. Otherwise, Tom would never have forgotten his aversion to the right side of Murillo Square and made his way to Bolivia's best second-class hotel. But whatever else his impulse accomplished, it provided Bolivia's great encyclopedia of useless information with an additional chapter based on an episode which will live in the countries south of the Caribbean as long as the memory of Bolivar.

At the Paris, Tom bought and paid for the best suite in the house. He was introduced to an incongruous combination of German tub and American shower bath after two Cholo porters had lugged upstairs his canvas bags of equipment containing a frying pan, blankets, picks and shovels and a hundred pounds of gold. "Tomicana" archives in Bolivia were enriched that night when the startled room clerk revealed the mysteries of bathroom mechanics, showed him the way the faucets worked and assured him the john was not a spring. Tom resented this explanation, because he had pulled a chain before.

Tom drew the first hot-water bath he had experienced in his long life spent in crude surroundings. He watched it flow, standing weavily upon carpeted floors. His feet stood fixed in one place, but his body turned on its axis like a toy autogyro spinning on its metal track. Water boils in the rare atmosphere of La Paz at 188.5° F., but steams in the cold high air at considerably lower temperature. As the hot water poured into the gigantic European tub, clouds filled the room with vapor. Tom

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looked at the unfamiliar sight in amazement. For a moment he thought the hotel was burning down.

He blinked in the surging white fog, made his way into the bathroom, and satisfied himself such was not the case. He stood embarrassedly above the tub and contemplated the inviting water. Even alone, he felt self-conscious before the bath. But he soon defiantly threw off his clothes and plunged into its depths.

The water was scalding, and anyone with tenderer skin than the weather-beaten gold washer would have quickly been parboiled. Even Tom winced. But he held out bravely. He thought it was the thing to do. Damned if he wouldn't show 'em.

Tom groaned and writhed in the enveloping agony for minutes before he was accustomed to the heat. He swore a good deal and screamed and yelled against the tortures of civilization. But he quieted down after a while, and actually found the water soothing and relaxing. Later, Tom admitted he even lathered himself with scented soap.

However, he was tired. Days on the trail and long months of hard work in the jungle had taken their toll, too much alcohol had made him groggy, and the heat lulled him strangely. Tom stopped screaming, began singing a wild Clune song and brayed himself to drowsiness and other Paris guests wide awake. Finally, he squeezed one of the oval bars of wet French soap in his fist, sent it ricocheting across the bathroom walls, and fell blissfully asleep.

Tom finally awoke with the dawn. The water was

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cold and he was hungry. He got to his feet, stood dripping and chilled in the center of the big white tub. Unfamiliar things in the bathroom puzzled him at first, but Tom had endured hangovers many times before and had never failed to piece together events of preceding nights, whether the mornings found him in llama stalls or Peruvian jails. So even these modern surroundings failed to faze him long.

He recovered miraculously from momentary shock and emerged from the tub. Heavy milky suds ran lazily down his little body. The wet stuff from cakes of dissolving soap matted the hair upon his form into long, drooping curls. Tom shook himself like a drenched spaniel and sprang across space directly into the bed. He pulled back the covers, dived between the sheets and rolled himself dry. This did not take him long.

His appetite was ravenous. He dressed quickly and emerged upon the streets of La Paz, which were white with hoar frost. Tom thought of \$40 worth of beans, \$80 worth of steak—any kind of food, but lots of it. He could hardly remember the time when hunger had gnawed with more insistent demands.

But the day was younger than Tom had thought. On the streets he saw the brittle frost had been little disturbed by sandaled Indian feet. Abroad in the city were only a few vicuña-skin salesmen who huddled beside their machos in little knots, wrapped in woolen blankets, red and gray striped. Despite all the visitor will hear, Aymaras do get cold. Indians of Bolivia are impervious to no extreme, and shiver like everyone else.

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Tiny icicles pushed up from river pebbles which pave the streets of La Paz. These had not been broken by car or cart, and Tom knew it was very early in the morning indeed. He shivered, too, like the Indians, and for an hour the sharp icicles snapped and cracked under his boots as he trudged the length of many streets off Murillo Square looking for a restaurant. But these exertions only served to increase his hunger, and the matutinal lights of La Paz changed many times under heaven's weaving filters. The first darting ray of sun stabbed over Illamini's peaks before he arrived finally at the market place.

It was too early even here for a hungry man to purchase food in the bustling place—that is, food which was cooked—but of raw meat and vegetables there were supplies in abundance. Machos and llamas from fincas and haciendas far and near stood tethered with their loads. Earlier risers had already stacked their goods upon the ground, or placed them in one of a thousand stalls. Chickens and ducks and geese cackled and quacked and hissed, an occasional pony neighed, Indian women jabbered before the fires of llama dung, and the colorful bedlam of primitive industry was often increased by high-C notes of skinny dogs whose owners buried tough big toes viciously into their stomachs when they nosed too close to dried lamb strips stacked upon the cobblestones.

This was the market of the Plaza of San Francisco. Great piles of manioc had already been placed on the large, cold flags. Rich things from the Yungas, Bolivia's

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garden valley, were in profusion everywhere. Sacks of coffee, oranges, melons, cacao, sugar cane, pineapples, dried beans, angora wool, bananas, avocados, lemons—all had been poured carelessly from the cornucopia of the nation's richest tropic soil. Goats, hind legs tied to fore, added their bleats to the symphony of the market place, accompanied by the hiss of geese and the cackling of hens.

Individual stalls, being unboarded in the dawn's light, revealed myriads of things from every department of Bolivia. Some of the stalls showed ajotas, the native leather sandals that the Quechuas wear. Others made ready to sell hualquis, leather bags for coca-eating Indians to carry their ever-present green drug. Massota, yucca rum made from grinding the plant into a white pulp, was displayed in jugs and bottles, large and small. Indian women who stir the yucca pulp while it is boiling often chew mouthfuls and spin it back into the pots.

Tom was too starved to marvel at these products of the tropics so casually displayed in the frigid capital. He vainly tried to persuade a Cholo woman to cook him a chupe. He offered a fortune for hot food of any kind, but he made his mistake by offering too much. The merchant women of the market thought him a crazy old man, completely out of his head.

But, finally, a great inspiration broke upon him. He suddenly remembered the clouds of steam billowing from his bathtub in the Paris Hotel.

"By God," he said, "I'll buy a chicken and boil the thing myself!"

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After he had purchased a big rooster and grasped it tightly under his arm, the Indians of the market place saw him running back toward the square at a pace much too fast for the altitude. He carried with him a llata of two eggs, something for nothing you will always get in La Paz when you make a cash purchase, the lagniappe of old Louisiana.

Once in his room, Tom wrung the rooster's neck. Blood spurted over walls and rugs, but the old man was too hungry to notice this. He dry-plucked the feathers from the carcass of the bird, ripped out the guts with a pocket knife as sharp as a razor, cut off the feet and wings, plugged the drain, turned on the hot water faucet and sighed in relief. Soon, he thought, he would have a nice boiled chicken all for himself. He could finish picking the feathers when the feast was ready. He carefully broke the eggs and placed them in the water for poaching. Then he lay down on his still wet bed and fell asleep.

When he awoke, the tub was running over, and not only the bathroom was full of water, but it had filled the bedchamber to a depth of a foot, and the water was cold! The rooster floated in the torrent of the tub, bobbing crazily as if making frenzied efforts to escape. The eggs, long since broken by the torrent, made a disgusting yellow mush.

The old man splashed through the lake of his room and retrieved the bird from the tub. The Paris provides hot water for its guests only with whimsical irregularity. Instead of a hot, boiled rooster, he held disgustedly in

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his hands a cold wet mess of fowl strangely scented like Parisian perfume.

When he told me this story on the trail near Tipuani, I asked Tom what on earth he did.

“I was so damned hungry by that time,” he said, “I ate the rooster raw.”

5.

“Spider Man”

IT WAS IN THE HAMBURGO BAR THAT I FIRST MET TOM face to face. As usual, he was holding forth to an interested group of mining men, salesmen and a sprinkling of the local bourgeoisie. Tom was drunk, but coherent.

That night he told the story of the “spider man.” That night, the history of my search was coursed toward the Matto Grosso. From then on, gooseflesh took charge of a skin which always before had been smooth against the thin thrills of civilization.

That night, too, was full of alcohol and full of fate. A certain destiny marched into things. Fawcett’s “garden of Eden” was real—I would find him. Tom told me so.

Anyone who, at sea under the Southern Cross, has seen a suspended, lazy-flying albatross scratch its nose with its left claw could find anything. That means the best of luck for the beholder. And I had seen it! It was a visual rabbit’s foot, left hind, graveyard, midnight.

Tom had rolled into the lobby bar of the Hamburgo to escape the cold of the streets. The stove warmed the thin air of high La Paz, but there was something missing. The inhospitable climate could not be conditioned by

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heat alone. North American hearts race furiously in the altitude. The air was empty. You missed the meaty oxygen of the sea.

But when you drink enough in La Paz you forget your lungs. Tom knew this of old, and the Hamburgo was as good a place as any, not too clean, and better if strangers were there to listen to stories of jungle tribes.

That night in the Hamburgo there was one who had never heard of Tom before. This was strange in South America, where Tom is a landmark as mighty as the Andes. He is the little man who walks alone and unarmed over the backbone of a hemisphere. To one and all he is, "Tum, muy bravo."

But to a drunken German newcomer before the pot-bellied stove that night he was just an insignificant little Irishman. That's where the German made a mistake. That night, those who saw and heard the goings-on expected Illimani to crash into the valley of La Paz. But the great mountain never trembled. Illimani left that for small men to do, because Tom was as big as Illimani and could take care of himself.

Tom, in his high pitched voice, ordered beer and alcohol and squinted at his prospective audience in the dim light. He was in a story-telling mood—not too sober; not too drunk.

He picked one of the best from his repertoire—the "Spider Man of Ixiamas." It took him three hours. Even the German kept his silence while Tom talked. You could have heard the fog rise from Lake Titicaca. It was that kind of a story. But when Tom was through, the

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big German, who had been drinking steadily all the while, staggered to his feet.

"Trying to make a fool out of me," he stated with ugly emphasis. "That story's a damned lie, and you're a son of a bitch!"

Everyone in the Hamburgo bar rose to his feet. A Bolivian friend of the prospector tried to slip Tom a luger pistol.

"Never mind the pistol," Tom said. "Put it back in your pocket." Little Tom walks unarmed over the backbone of a hemisphere in savage lands.

He got to his feet unsteadily. The German towered over him a full foot. He looked like a condor blinking at the attack of a game bantam rooster. Tom looked him up and down, thought the matter over carefully and finally pronounced judgment.

"You don't know me well enough to call me a son of a bitch," he said and walked out of the Hamburgo lobby bar.

Only when he was out in the cobbled streets of the Plaza did he hear the cheers of the men he had left behind in the bar. Yes, that night the natives of Bolivia said that Tom had grown as big as Illimani.

"You're yellow if you hit a drunk who insults you," Tom explained the next day. "And some people will think you're yellow if you don't, so you're in the middle either way."

The old man did not seem to know that he had uttered a classic in the Hamburgo bar which will go down in history to rival the famous "smile" of The Virginian.

“SPIDER MAN”

But that is why today in La Paz men say that only their friends can call them sons of bitches. “You have to know me well to call me that” will be the code of La Paz forever more, so unless you know a Bolivian very well, treat him formally. Just call him señor.

All of this came out of the story of the “spider man.” He ought to have been called the “Siamese husband.”

In addition to seeking the “garden of Eden,” Fawcett also was searching for this fabled monstrosity who had lived so long on the back of his wife in the marshes along the Madidi River that he had grown to her flesh. The story came out of the jungle with such regularity that Fawcett believed it true.

Tom started his account of it with a plausible theory.

“The man probably had infantile paralysis,” he stated; “and when he threw the disease off his legs were so shriveled that he no longer could walk.

“His wife was a big woman and she got in the habit of carrying him around on her back. His arms were strong and he clung to her. She carried him everywhere. No one, remember, wears clothes along the Madidi. The man just stuck to her nude flesh. He grew to it. His blood ran into her blood. After many years his chest grew solidly to her back. He became a part of this faithful woman, and she fed him over her shoulder.

“She raced through the jungle with ease. She washed gold with him on her back, and hunted monkeys. She was a strong woman, nearly six feet tall. Her husband grew smaller through the years. He began to look like a spider. His body shriveled from lack of exercise, while

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his wife's body grew stronger, and her muscular development was amazing.

"It happened at first that one night when the woman started to put her husband down on a bed, he wouldn't come off. She must have thought his arms were cramped so tightly around her neck that he couldn't release them, so they slept together that night, chest to back, thinking his muscles would relax and he could free himself the next day. However, the next day it was the same as the night before. The man's body still stuck. They soon accepted all of this philosophically, and the neighbors took it as a matter of course.

"For years this story had been common jungle talk. Fawcett went crazy over it. He asked me to lead him to Ixiamas to find them. He wanted to take the man and woman to London to be examined by celebrated surgeons. It was a miracle, Fawcett believed. He was sure their discovery would somehow change the history of medicine.

"His enthusiasm didn't arouse much in me. Fawcett would believe anything. He believed in all the fairy tales he heard. He thought he had discovered the answer to mental telepathy. He was a great mystic. Sometimes he would think of something suddenly important, and would whisper it to you confidentially even though you were on the trail a hundred miles from another man. Fawcett was that way, but there was something about him I liked, anyway. So I agreed to take him on the thirty-day trip to Ixiamas.

"We got there all right, but it was a hell of a trip.

"SPIDER MAN"

Fawcett was sick a week in Tumupasa. Has the fever. But he shook it off finally, and we went on. Fawcett let his imagination run wild on the trip. As he neared Ixi-amas he was as excited as a child. He asked me one day the silliest question I ever heard.

" 'What,' he said, 'would happen if the woman fell madly in love with another man, and her husband was with her, always glued to her back? What would be the result if the husband loved his wife so much he would agree to her having the man as a lover?'

" 'Sometimes,' Tom said, 'I thought Fawcett was plain nuts.

" 'We got into Ixi-amas late one afternoon after five weeks on the trail. We found the 'spider man' all right, but he wasn't grown to the woman's back, after all. She just carried him around during the day. This had been going on for years.

" 'Too bad!' Fawcett said. 'You can tell that he hasn't grown to her back, because the yard is full of children, and they look like papa, too.'

" 'Fawcett was disgusted, but he never gave up. He was soon bubbling again about the 'garden of Eden.' He talked about it for a month, all the way back to La Paz.

" 'Only thing we got out of that trip was a lot of tribal hospitality. The spider man's wife was so pleased with a lot of Fowler's solution of arsenic I gave her that she boiled a whole litter of kittens. That was a fine feast, and at the same time seemed worth the trouble.'

6.

“Hold On, Fawcett, I’ll Be There!”

TOM TRUSTED ME AFTER A WEEK OF DRINKING IN ALL the bars of La Paz, roaming the irregular cobbled streets of the capital, sharing gossip and opinions. He respected my capacity, developed in the era of Greenwich Village bathtub gin.

After the eighth day of roistering, he agreed to take me into the jungle. But not until he was broke completely. This routine he would not change even for a new two-fisted drinker friend who could keep up with his own noble pace, or for any other reason. It had been going on too long, so I had to wait until his money was gone.

One day, word spread through La Paz that Tom was ill. I hurried to his stable with a doctor at my side, with a feeling for the little old man that was half affection, half selfish fear that my most priceless acquisition would pass away before he could keep his promise to make the trip to the curare empire bordering Fawcett’s Eden.

"HOLD ON, FAWCETT, I'LL BE THERE!"

Tom lay sprawled on his blanket, groaning, swearing, sobered by pain.

"It's my stomach, Doc," he said, pointing to his right side. "God forgiving me, I'll never take a drink again."

The doctor pushed four inches of iron forefinger into the old man's gut and Tom did a jackknife.

"Not drink this time, Tom," was the diagnosis. "Appendicitis."

"Thank God!" Tom murmured.

In three weeks Tom was out of the hospital as good as new. Hospital bills had cost more than drink. Tom was broke. I was saved from certain D.T.'s. Soon we could head into the unknown world of shaman and the poisoned dart.

Tom's stay in the hospital was not without incident. One day he screamed for the nurse, causing such a bedlam that three came running to his room.

"Gas," Tom announced, "is escaping from my incision."

"Impossible!" the nurse said, and turned to leave, thinking him as crazy as usual.

At that moment there was a loud shrill sound, a "zree—eee," which filled the room. The nurses, startled, rushed to Tom's bed.

"See," he said triumphantly, "I told you so. Gas is definitely escaping from my cut."

The nurses hurried to call the doctor, who arrived on the run to investigate the strangest phenomenon which had ever been known in Bolivian hospitals.

"Of course, it's all nonsense," the doctor said. "I

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sewed you up myself. It's impossible that gas can escape from the incision."

"But listen, Doc," Tom said. "There it is again!" And sure enough, there was another unmistakable "zree—eee."

The doctor turned pale, hurriedly pulled the covers from Tom and glued his ear upon the incision. Nothing happened in the bed, but a loud cavari bird, which had been calling to its mate from Tom's window sill, flew away, filling the skies of La Paz with noisy "zrees," and professional pride was saved.

Everyone was glad when irascible Tom was dismissed, but none happier than I. Already, I knew La Paz as one knows his own block at home. I knew the Altiplano, the cobbled, uneven primitive streets, the incongruously paved Prado, and the trees and shrubs in the parks, kept alive with eternal loving care in a clime where temperatures are low the year round. I knew the tin mines of Patino's Illimani, the shores of Lake Titicaca, the vicuña salesmen, and the black market for American drafts and Bolivian bills.

The great valley, three miles wide and ten miles long, was an old story now, repeated many times while I waited for Tom to get well. I knew every mineral-colored precipice rising from the very gates of the city fifteen hundred feet to the great plateau, and their gullies and their shades. They were no longer thrilling to see. Any Mexican city of 200,000 population, if placed at the bottom of the Grand Canyon, would look very much the same as La Paz in its great eroded valley.

By this time I knew all of the things which make La

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Paz one of the most distinctive cities in the world, but because of my lungs, I was more conscious of its altitude than of the incongruous things which met my eye. The handful of Americans who have lived in La Paz for many years are never unmindful of it. They are conscious of soroche every minute of the day because soroche, or a threat of it, is always there, in waking and sleeping hours alike. A standard wise-crack of Yanquis on leaving a bar or the billiard room of the Strangers Club is invariably: “I’m going out to get a breath of thin air.”

The altitude has set La Paz apart from every other capital in the world. It has affected the entire history of the people, has etched something scary in their faces, has affected their hearts, souls, impulses and industries. Even the ladies who employ the heated perfume in green-shuttered windows on cobbled ways, have had to adjust themselves to the effect of King Altitude. The truth is, depressing heights are not entirely conducive to amorous adventures. Every exertion of necessity must be deliberate and conservative. Groups of Yanqui tourists, of the male sex, who pour off the Lake Titicaca night steamer at Huaqui, bent on naughty excursions to the famous scented rooms, quickly change their minds when the inexorable force of height conquers every thought of illicit love. The result is that the perfumed cholitas, who have given up their eight underskirts for one pair of silk pajamas, have come to think of Americans as cold and unloving men.

Old Tom did everything possible to discount this libel

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by making frequent jaunts to the fragrant shops. However, he always demanded that the places be aired out before he came to terms.

The fact that Tom was an Irishman and not an American was never considered, since the cholitas thought all white men were either Yanquis or Germans, and even a Clune Indian could see plainly that the prospector had in him nothing Teutonic. Therefore Americans benefitted by his patronage, which was an early example of the good-neighbor policy not to be lightly dismissed.

Tom won the good will of the cholitas for Americans over great odds, since it was he alone who proved by his faithful performances that this great race had unsuspected virility, contradicting the behavior of contemptible examples of Yanquis who puffed forlornly past the seductive lures without even so much as a sniffle of temptation. One or two middle-aged American tourists who once braved the acclivity to the row and devilishly decided to show soroche a thing or two, failed miserably. One of these, a fat little Atlanta dentist, fainted dead away, much to the disgust of his companion, who threw cold water in his face and screamed insults as she booted him into the streets. The other American patron had a more severe attack of soroche, lost his lunch on a fine vicuña-skin rug and ruefully parted with a sum of money ten times its value in settlement of the damage.

But Tom was different. He had adjusted himself to the altitude more by stubborn contempt for it than by the natural consequence of slow acclimatization.

Although the residents of the houses were extremely

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young and pretty girls, as cholitas go, Tom, whose first experience in his favorite casa years ago was with an older woman, demanded her company in preference to all others. Tom’s initiation in this parlor had taken place a good quarter of a century before my arrival in La Paz when the madame was “one of the girls”—even then an aging twenty-year-old cholita whose favors were reluctantly accepted only by the most undesirable of guests. But Tom liked her from the first and was loyal to her ever after. Now pushing fifty, Tom’s favorite, who at this time owned the place, beamed gratefully each time he rapped upon her door.

“Once,” he told me, “I caught her pulling gray hairs from her temples with a pair of eyebrow tweezers, but I made her stop that foolishness.”

“Why?”

“Well, I put a lot of them there myself. A man’s proud of his own work, I guess.”

Tom figured he had an investment in those gray hairs, too.

“Every one she’s got cost me a thousand bills—Bolivianos,” he said. “When I look at them it’s like seeing money in a frozen bank. You know you had it once, even if you can’t spend it again. It’s just a little better than nothing at all.”

The little cholitas in the row discarded their work clothes on venturing into the plazas and shopping districts of La Paz on holidays, and attired themselves voluminously in the garments of their more conventional people. These garments have been the same ever since

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a Chola has been a Chola, which means from the day the first baby was born to an Indian mother and a Spanish father. Much of this sort of thing had been going on long before La Paz, the "City of Peace," was founded in 1549, after Almagro and Pizarro got together and decided to let bygones be bygones.

The raiment of the female consists, invariably, of from eight to fifteen "petticoats," which are really just so many skirts, one over the other. Prosperous Chola women wear silk skirts or woolen skirts of fine fabrics, while others of the poorer classes bulge with the coarsest of garments, but all the brown Cholas of Bolivia follow the same pattern, regardless of quality, and consequently are the "hippiest" women in the world.

So-called "high-class" Chola women wear derby hats, expensive white kid boots with inordinately high heels and adorn themselves with emeralds, heavy gold necklaces, silver chains and, sometimes, diamonds. Pearls are favorites with some of them, who also go in for volumes of lace on their underclothing. Rich and poor alike dress colorfully, and the streets of La Paz are splashed with the riotous hues of their billowed dresses, flowing robes and white, chalked bowlers. The "walking rainbows" clash with the chaos of blossoms that the municipality and home owner alike nurse tenderly in park and garden.

La Paz could be genuinely thrilling to a traveler fortunate enough to enjoy it from the comfort of a windowed oxygen tank, and could be more fully appreciated. In some moods it has the flavor of a great gypsy camp spattered by a crazy spinning color-wheel. Green

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rooftops, side walls of reds, yellows, pinks, purples and fuchsia, blended from a spectrum out of this world, give the city a year-round festival air.

This appearance is definitely deceptive. The real mood of the city is better expressed in the somber black *mantas* of aristocratic semi-Spanish ladies. La Paz has much to mourn about, as does all of Bolivia, and any effort to simulate gaiety falls flat as a tragic fraud. Too fresh are the memories of the lost Chaco War to encourage really hearty laughter about anything. Furthermore, the effort would be too much of a shock physically for frequent repetition.

Always present, too, is the threat of starvation. Bolivia, to survive, must import food across borders of cool or downright unfriendly countries. Today economists estimate that inflation has raised the cost of living in the sad land of the Andes as much as 1,000 per cent, causing more suffering than usual in a country where the plight of the poor always has been, in good times and bad, unbelievably desperate.

By nature gloomy introverts, the Quechuas of the highlands have imparted some of their own melancholy to Cholo and semi-Spaniard alike, and the foreign colonies seem to have been infected to some extent by the same influence. The miserable dead-pan inscrutability of the Quechua is marked by one constant, unmistakable expression. This is one of sullen despair, only occasionally relieved by wild, alcoholic jags which release torrents of pent-up emotions and result in brawls and grimaces of the type only drunken Indians can produce.

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These are the people who sleep in miserable mud shacks on the cold, wind-swept plateau above La Paz; cook on fires of llama dung, the only fuel they have in a treeless world; and begin starving from the moment they are born. They chew coca interminably to kill the pangs of hunger and when they die relatives stuff their mouths with the green narcotic leaves to keep their gaunt ghosts drugged against the misery of famine in the hereafter.

These are the Indians who do the "dirty work" of La Paz, who sweat with too heavy loads in the high capitals, who drive the llamas and trot in sandaled feet behind donkey trains at a pace which would kill a white man in a few minutes. These are the illiterate Quechua Indians, sullen human animals whose lives are hopeless, whose wages are worse than death.

These are the pure Quechuas, who consider their half-breed cousins, the Cholos, worse than contemptible, and assert they have betrayed their race by mixing with the white man. But the Cholo figures otherwise, and feels only that he has in this mating process escaped a drab fate too horrible to think of as ever having been possible even by the accident of birth.

As cordially disdainful of the Quechua is the Cholo, who, in turn, is regarded as inferior by the aristocrats, a few of whom are pure white, or, as they boast, "untainted." Some snubbed the billionaire tin king, Patino, when he sought their society. Shortly after this he departed for Europe and has never once returned. The pure white contingent of Bolivian society will do busi-

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ness with Patino and any other meztizo; but as for accepting him on a social par, that is a matter unthinkable.

Patino has explained to intimates that he cannot endure the heights of Bolivia because of his health, but his knowing countrymen merely smile at this old, old story.

The Quechua and his half-breed cousins meet the trains on the heights at Alto La Paz and stare at the passengers bound for the strange bowl, far below. When the puffing steam engine has braked its cars smokingly and doubled and redoubled itself many times around the terraced sides to gain the station, other Quechuas and other cousins in colorful ponchos handle the freight and the baggage of the cash fares for miserable coppers in tips or wages.

The Quechua does not protest too much. He will grumble only mildly in his choppy dialect, but the Cholo does enough for both put together. All sorts of extremists find the Cholo easy to organize so long as he is pitted “against” something. The Germans have effectively leveled their best propaganda in his direction, flattered the half-breed, appealed to his cunning and over-all ambition, led him to the slaughter of war and revolutions and succeeded in using him far too often for the good of Bolivia or the Cholo or anyone else, save possibly a group of “brains” with the inside track.

Communists and labor agitators of all sorts have found the downtrodden people represented by this class easy converts, and Fascists, jingoists and dictators, military and political, have swayed them seemingly at will from one side to another. Proof of this is seen in all of Bo-

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livia's history which has, willy-nilly, weaved through a contradictory filter, to the country's great national sorrow and retrogression. In all of these things the pure Indian is comparatively aloof, but recently he seems to have shaken off at least some of his lethargy.

The Cholo, backbone of the Bolivian nation, today is being courted by many factions within and without the landlocked borders. Nazi Germany, the Allies, local politicians and militarists of Bolivia all find the country more interesting than ever. This is, of course, because of the importance of tin in time of war.

Uncle Sam was winning out swimmingly with the Penaranda government until the local Germans and their newspapers, friends, wives, gold and beer parlors upset his best-laid plans. Round one was Uncle Sam's; round two has gone to the Nazis, but this is no reason to believe that the final decision will be theirs. Seesaw Bolivia can change as rapidly as do the colors on the precipices of La Paz when the sun rolls westward across the barren plateaus to drink the waters of Titicaca and warm the desert side of the Andes.

German "family" roots had much to do with the Penaranda downfall, since many of the 9,000 pro-Nazi Germans in Bolivia have married prominent Bolivian women and exert much influence outside of the press. German is heard on all sides in La Paz and is second only to Spanish. Germans in La Paz operate some of the hotels and banks, many of the shops, bars, stores, and travel agencies, and represent the most important importing and exporting houses. For a while they dominated Bo-

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livian air, but Penaranda clipped their wings so that they no longer fly. The Germans never miss an opportunity to snipe treacherously at Yankee “imperialism.”

The German language, spoken by pro-Nazis, is also the tongue of many German-Jewish refugees who entered Bolivia in considerable numbers after the outbreak of war in Europe. The “Aryan” Germans despise the newcomers and have lost little opportunity in spreading ill will against the Jew among the natives. Thousands of Jews who have entered Bolivia bought forged passports from crooked Bolivian politicians, and Jewish immigration was halted abruptly a few years ago when the frauds were exposed. Now no Jews are admitted to the country.

After the disastrous Chaco War, armies of wounded filled the streets of La Paz with wheel chairs. Crutches and canes played tattoos on the cobbled streets like drummer boys rallying Indian troops against the forces of Paraguay. More than 150,000 Bolivians and Paraguayans lost their lives in the bloody war over the strip of jungle known as the Territorio del Gran Chaco, or the Chaco Boreal. Officially the total is somewhat lower, estimated at about 140,000 dead, but another 10,000 Bolivians and Paraguayans—a conservative estimate—died later as the result of privations, disease and wounds suffered in the silly hostilities over a swamp no one in Texas would consider worth a cow pony.

Many of the survivors of the Chaco War today are in hospitals in the highlands of Bolivia suffering from tuberculosis, from which thousands of their red brothers

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died when sent away to front lines in a climate where the air was full of oxygen. Oxygen mowed down an appalling number of Indians of Bolivia who cannot take it as rich as it comes anywhere near sea level. Paraguay, which actually won the war, had oxygen as one of its most formidable weapons.

The most persistent story is that the border dispute between La Paz and Asunción was cooked up into a full-fledged three-year war, lasting from 1932 to 1935, by the German generals who trained the Bolivian army and wanted an outlet to the sea to build an oil pipe line for budding Nazi Germany. Big oil fields in Bolivia were a rich source for German needs, but getting it to Germany was another story. Portless Bolivia, at the mercy of her careful and suspicious neighbors on every side as regards transportation, had to have a pipe line through the Chaco. A victory over Paraguay would give Germany what she wanted.

German propaganda did a perfect job. Indians who had never heard of the Chaco were rounded up like cattle, divested of their ostrich-feather plumes, uprooted from villages all over the unhappy nation, put in German uniforms, divorced from their blow guns and trained to shoot lugers and fight with bayonets.

When it was all over, Bolivia gave up about 100,000 square miles of her Chaco territory to Paraguay, and Paraguay conceded to Bolivia a round-about outlet to the sea—via the Paraguay River.

Defeat stung the Bolivian people to the national quick, and, quite naturally and traditionally, Bolivia looked for

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a goat. Oddly enough, the Germans escaped too much censure. Instead, Standard Oil was blamed for withholding oil supplies from the Bolivian troops and piping it via a secret pipe line into Argentina. Standard denied it eloquently. General David Toro, “hero” of the Chaco, was made President of Bolivia, seized the 2,800,000 acres of oil land leased to the big American company, and tried to stave off post-war economic ruin for his nation. He failed.

Then came Busch.

Seizures were getting popular, so Busch seized the country’s tin mines, and ordered the execution of the big miner Hoschschild. Somehow the mines were not seized, Hoschschild somehow was never even arrested, and Busch got drunk, as usual. Busch was always drunk or getting ready to get drunk. This time he drank too much, and history knows that the official result was his suicide. The “official” result and the whispered result are two different things. Some say Busch tried to swallow too much tin and was murdered.

The next President was Penaranda—Indian, full Indian. He settled with Standard Oil for \$1,500,000, backed the mine owners, seized German air lines, turned them over to U.S. companies, attacked labor, shot more than sixty striking miners, of whom nineteen died. All of the dead and wounded were Indians, like Penaranda. Penaranda kicked out the German minister, frowned on Japanese contracts, canceled a flock of them, supported the United States.

Tin and oil are considered very tricky commodities

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down in Bolivia. They fill the streets with wounded and graves with the dead.

All this at first depressed me, then it palled. I wanted a fight with the giants of the Andes. I had Fawcett in my mind, and the jungle in my blood. Nothing else would satisfy. The garden of Eden was over Ancohuma. Only Tom had the key to paradise. I headed to his adobe stable to force a showdown.

Tom was washing his hands in a solution of bichloride of mercury. His right forefinger was badly cut.

"Had to hit an Indian this afternoon," he said. "Opened my hand on his teeth. This bichloride is for syphilis. He might have it. If I have to catch that stuff, I don't want to get it in my hand."

This night Tom was alone. Chita had long since gone on to Sorata to wait there for the push with us over the cordillera trail. I had Tom alone, and before I left him that night he had promised to start the following day on the first step on the long search for Fawcett.

"I think you'll find him. Fawcett liked Bolivia too much to stay in Brazil. I've always believed he headed for the Beni land when he left the Xingu River."

That night in my Hamburgo Hotel room I oiled a pistol.

In the morning we left craterlike La Paz behind for the plunge into the empire of the monkey and the shaman. At last I was off to fight the giants of the cold Andes and the microscopic things of the hot and chirping jungle—to eat a cat in the Beni land.

Hold on, Fawcett, I'll be there!

7.

Over the Hump

THERE IS ONLY ONE WAY INTO THE VALLEY OF TIPUANI. That is over the Inca trail meandering, gradually at first, from the very heart of Sorata, Bolivia, until it becomes in a few short hours a way of hell, through hell, to hell. This is the trail which leads upward to a summit 17,400 feet high which is the kingdom of soroche.

Chita and Tom and I set out with our boys early in the weird misty morning we picked to begin the great adventure. When we left the little city we knew the angry mountains of the Andes loomed above and ahead of us, but we could not see them. But we could feel them, and the fog they threw at us in wet gusts from the alarming heights.

It somehow was an uneasy beginning, unreal, alien, unfriendly. The fog nagged for a moment or two and made the men and the girl and the beasts cough. Later it seemed an oppressive wall against which all who scaled the heights must push. Mile after mile it closed around us tightly with insistent frontal pressure. Sometimes it was quiet, again it seemed to hiss. The path ahead was always concealed and the fog shut off each

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step we left behind. The ground was hard and the mules' feet rattled. It was a warm sound to hear, but not enough to shake off the foreboding which grew and grew insanely with each kilometer gained.

Today I know that this depression was the first slight symptom of soroche, but then I was gripped with unaccountable fear. Everything was beginning to take on unfamiliar aspects. My shoes seemed larger to my sight after a few hours than they had been before. But when I stared down at them later they were very far away and quite small. This puzzling phenomenon worried me.

Conscience over agreeing to Chita's dangerous trip also plagued out of all proportion. When I had mildly suggested to old Tom that the girl might well be left behind in Sorata to escape the hazards of an expedition into country from which the strongest men had frequently never returned, he glared at me wildly.

"Get this straight," he said. "She goes, or I don't go."

That was enough for me. I never mentioned it again. I knew better. Without old Tom to guide me, my saga would have ended before it really began.

"Take along a dozen harlots, for all I care," I replied quietly.

Tom calmed down. "Might not be a bad idea, at that," he muttered. "When you get out there with those Indian women, you'll know what I mean."

In all fairness, I *did* learn what he meant and recalled his prophecy many times.

But now, fighting toward the heights, things were entirely out of focus, in eyesight and mind as well. After

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an hour or two of semi-delirious thinking and physical suffering to gain altitude, the fog cleared slightly and we caught a glimpse of the damp blue sky. Clouds guarded the peaks we could see, and from time to time grumbled at their duty. My companions loomed into view intermittently, but their silhouettes were distorted. When I viewed them in clear patches on the trail, they seemed to weave unnecessarily. When I tried to shout to Tom, who was just ahead of me, to ask if I could help him, I made a sparrow squeak. The effort hurt my lungs and I never tried to call out to him again up there in the wilderness of staggering peaks.

The swirling fog cleared capriciously and often revealed flocks of grazing mountain sheep tended by sad-faced boys from lofty fincas. The wool of the animals was thin and black, like the rusty crags which permitted only the scantiest of anemic vegetation to hold in shallow rock dust.

Soon even the sheep were left behind. The trail grew steeper, the air thinner, the mind less ordered than before. Tiny swift mountain birds, iron-gray like some of the pinnacles, plummeted inches above snow banks and "buzzed" our heads like stunting fighter planes. Their wings whined close to our ears like struts in a power dive.

When the trail at one point curled on icy gravel precariously around a jutting boulder hundreds of feet high, one scary look downward revealed a drop of 8,000 feet into a terraced valley. We hugged the boulder instinctively, slowed our molasses pace. The animals did the

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same. The llamas tried to push the boulder to the west and scraped patches of wool onto the jagged sides. We made it, and around the corner came upon a level spot. The llamas stopped; they had traveled far enough without a breathing spell. The muleteers loosed their packs, attended to the mules. Tom and Chita and I lay down quietly, without a word, and slept.

A muleteer awoke us to continue the climb. Chita looked gray; her eyes bulged. Tom seemed distraught. Crazy notions filtered through my head, which ached and pounded. But we kept ahead. We had some climbing to do. We were close to the top of the Andes.

Mighty old Ancohuma and his little twin, Illampu, tickled the highest clouds in the Andes and brought forth a mirthless roar of thunder and a belching of snow. It was noon in a dark nightmare world of soroche in the great cordillera trail of Bolivia. Ancohuma raised his highest, meanest rock peak 21,490 feet high into the firmament. Uncivilized, wet-smack snow suddenly transformed the thin air into a blanket of mush. Half-world winds joined the storm. The mean little gods of altitude rampaged on high.

Through this cold, high-noon hell, we, vomiting white men and a frightened, soroche-sickened Chilean whore, fought our way toward the summit. Our dainty-stepping pack llamas coughed coarsely with every wet breath. The little macho mules carrying supplies tried pitifully, like tortured horses, to whinny, as they fought the pull of gravity and inched it by small degrees toward the top of the earth.

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Tom and I jointly held on to the tail of the lead mule, which kicked short kicks unavailingly in protest, but pulled us onward. To the second mule's tail with stout cord we lashed the wrists of the Chilean girl with stout cord. It was the only way to get her over the hump. Her legs long since had given way. Soroche had beaten her down, and it had started a nasal hemorrhage. Little veins, bursting in her eyes, loosed bloody tears. Her head roared like the storm itself. Half-conscious, inert, she was dragged upward by the macho. Her body traced a crazy pattern through the snow.

Two muleteers fought ahead under their own steam. They were Indian boys, with big chests like beer kegs engineered by heredity to fight the thin air of the high Andes; but even these arrieros found the going agonizing, and coughed and wheezed between dialect curses and shouting commands and proddings of llama and mule.

Only a hundred yards ahead, but still, it seemed, light years away, was the summit of the trail the Incas made. Over the hump, downward just a little, *was* precious, thicker air—oxygen to fill pain-wracked lungs, oxygen for the blood, oxygen for the brain, oxygen for life itself.

A torturing hour passed and the storm cleared suddenly. The sun came out.

"Ah!" exclaimed an Indian boy. "The Bolivian stove!"

Darkness gave way completely as the great heater's warm rays lighted the nevada and stabbed unreal, bil-

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lion-watt fingers as long as eternity upon a glacier a million years old. Ancohuma's peaks, close enough to touch, stood revealed. A condor circled in anemic, cirrus clouds.

Llamas stepped ahead. The machos grunted, pulled their burdens a little faster, and there, only a few feet away was a great wooden cross of Christ. Some devout Indians had made the trail their Calvary and planted the shrine close enough to touch the gates of Heaven. God climbs high in the Andes.

Air here was even thinner than a hundred yards below, but still the summit was victory for the pilgrims and the beasts. It pointed the way downward on the other side toward breathing air. Every lost inch of altitude from here on in would help drive racing madness from the brain. Soroche would be left behind.

The girl Chita sensed it first. She opened her eyes and called weakly. Dragged by the now half-bolting macho, she summoned a last surge of strength and pulled herself to her bleeding knees, then to her feet. The lead-footed Indian boys cut the cords from her wrists. She fell in a faint upon the shadow of the cross.

Indian boys, machos and llamas plunged ahead downward, drawing strength from desperation. Tom and I let go of our mule's tail and swayed stupidly above the form of the girl. Chita's fifteen-year-old olive breasts, full blown by tropic clime and caresses of a thousand men, throbbed above a racing heart. Like automata, we lifted her and stumbled toward the oasis of oxygen a few hundred feet below. The girl's long hair loosened and swept the mush.

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We lunged drunkenly with our burden until we reached the spot on the mountainside below where llamas and machos already had achieved blackened stipa ychu grass grazing, and the Indians a resting place on icy gravel. Chita we tossed half tenderly beside them, and ourselves tumbled to the ground. There we lay for hours, the stupor passing.

Tom shook my shoulders; the sun was halfway down the side of the western sky.

"We got to do something about *them*," he said, pointing to Chita's torn knees and bleeding legs. "It 'ud be a shame to let anything happen to them."

They were long legs, well shaped, but what remained of skin was shredded. I found my feet and started for our packs.

"I will get some bandages," I said.

"Not yet," Tom stopped me. "First, what those legs need is urine, piping hot."

I thought I'd heard him wrong, and stared my incredulity.

"Best antiseptic known," he grunted. "I've used it in the jungle for years. Iodine is too caustic; the ammonia does the trick. The Indians taught me. It makes damned good sense."

He called one of the Indian boys and jabbered something, handing him the empty fruit jar which was his tobacco humidor.

"I'll let him fill her up," he said. "At seventy I am not as fast as I used to be."

The fruit jar steamed in the cold mountain air, and

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as the liquid splashed on the open wounds of Chita she winced and opened her eyes. It was the crudest remedy I had ever seen, and I said so.

“What the hell!” replied Tom. “We used a jar, didn’t we? That was for you. It’s better applied direct.”

Chita sat up and smiled.

8.

The Fire of Tusuhuayo

BARREN ACRES LIKE THE SURFACE OF JUPITER, COPPERY moon craters of rusty stagnant water and the deserts of Mars unfolded on every side as we, passengers out of a rocket ship, fought our way downward out of the bewildering realm of height.

Slowly our senses returned. Things gradually came back into proper focus. A few miles downward and we turned back to look upon the scene of our late victory. I knew I was sane again, because Ancohuma and Illampu now were beautiful to behold. The peaks were all ice, but somehow they seemed warm, strangely warm.

"Tom," I said philosophically, "you can't hate a man you've licked."

"I don't get it," replied the prospector. "But you'll overcome your soroche soon. All men do."

I decided not to pursue the subject.

Human life was cropping out now like spring buds on a pear tree. An Indian musician, walking lonesomely on a parallel trail, puffed a frigid love song on a long wind pipe, a frustrated, Tibetan air of resignation and grief. He walked heavily, eyes half closed, to the cold rock

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home of a farmer girl he loved. He was working himself into a state of despair, a gloomy Pan with a primitive syrinx. In the heights of this cold land man has learned not to hope for the best. Because of this very few are ever disappointed.

Such was the sad land under unbroken blue skies down which we made our way, a land without smiles, a land without laughter, a land without a joke. Humorless, thin, poor—a land of cold sun, mock sun, unsocial, gloomy, crag-bound, enslaved by nature, seamed and scarred by the elements, exploited by literate men, worked by toil of the slave. This has ever been the history of the terrain down which we made our way. We were bound for Ancoma.

Castellated pinnacles on every side were becoming spotted with green and the lower temperature ribboned snowy peaks with black fillets. Still it was little less than an Arctic desert, but each inch we moved nearer the jungle below brought new life to the cold bedlam of crags. A llama's bell tinkled somewhere ahead, a bird with blue wings flew across the trail. We saw eight condors feeding on the carcass of a goat.

Ugly, walled Ancoma is a rock village of vassal Indians, perched on a sudden llano down the mountain-side. Here was a Tibetan world in the Western hemisphere, where nature's disposition was perennially bad. Here farmers labored and coaxed pigmy crops a few feet high; but mostly the elements threw everything in the book upon body and soil.

Here the Indians scratched rubble land with wooden

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hoes. They worked in rain, sleet, flash storms, dressed in ankle-length straw coats and strange peaked mountain hats. They grew undersized potatoes, like English walnuts, which they froze in glacial ice boxes to blacken and preserve. They bred ugly babies with golden skin, high cheekbones and angry eyes, and struggled with scanty Arctic vegetation in the heights. The bitterness of life in a cold purgatory of altitude etched something shuddering upon their faces.

Into this feudal place once each year puffed agents of an absentee patron in La Paz. They gathered up the landowner's part of the poor crop, loaded the rent bushels upon llamas and hurried away from the icy plague. Sometimes rival missionaries braved the heights to proselyte, and on these rare occasions pulled God to pieces as they squabbled over bewildered pagan souls.

Through the gate of this village, long after dark, lush Chita, now something of a queen astride a mule, led our little cavalcade. Old Tom trotted beside her solicitously. Often his hand reached for hers, and she flashed easy, heated eyes upon him.

That night, for a handful of small Bolivian silver, we bedded down in dry wheat straw in the communal barn of the village. Chita made arrangements close to old Tom. The Indians slept indifferently in a far corner by llamas and mules. I piled straw mountainously under my blanket.

Peohos, restless Bolivian lice which love high, cold country best of all, attacked in relays nearly all the night. I wondered whether it was this which kept me awake

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for so many hours. It might have been. Yet there was a disturbing primitive symphony close by in the hay. Old Tom and Chita were not scratching lice.

After a while, I fell into an envious, half-conscious sleep. There every girl was like Chita, fifteen. Every man was like Tom, seventy, old, one-eyed, undersized. Cupid looked upon them and vomited like soroche victims on Ancohuma. Fifteen and seventy. This was a crazy country, anyway. Even the W.C. in Sorata's hotel was on a platform built openly above the kitchen stove. My sleep became more sound.

This was the first night on the sometimes cobbled Inca trail, which will lead you and coca-eating Indians into the Beni land, the Rio Madre de Dios and the Matto Grosso of Brazil, the steaming jungle, the curare empire of blowgun and goiter. Follow it and you will find Fawcett's jumping-off place, and Indian men with long plaited hair hanging down to their buttocks. Fools toil down it, but not angels. "They can't fly that high," the Bolivians will tell you.

The second night we camped at Pan y Agua. The Indian boys tell you that you are there. You wouldn't know it otherwise. Pan y Agua is a flat place, nothing more, but all day as you labor to reach it up and down raw mountain stretches, you picture it as a village.

The Indian boys are in good humor because the day is over. They laugh now and make a good joke when they say: "This is Pan y Agua," (bread and water) "but here there is neither bread nor water—ha, ha!"

"Well, how did it get its name?" you ask.

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"From the bread and water you bring along yourself to eat—ha, ha!"

It's a great joke. Everyone roars. We had made more than a mile an hour average that day, and we felt quite pleased. "Ni pan, ni agua—ha, ha!" we repeat it over and over and feel it is almost genius.

You eat a tinned biscuit. The Indian boys suck a mouth pack of white mud and coca leaves. You feel good enough now. This is a fine camp. Chita wolfs Vienna sausages, jelly and all. Old Tom pulverizes hard, parched corn with his own teeth. "What a man!" you think.

The altitude is a respectable 6,000 feet or so, like Denver. You think of Denver suddenly as a sissy.

"The Rockies are toothpicks," I said to Tom. "I could jump over them all on a pogo stick."

"They're just anthills," Tom said.

"I feel like I've scaled Everest," I said.

"You damned near have," Tom replied.

In the Andes, Ancohuma bows only slightly to Aconcagua.

You don't seem to mind this second night when Tom and Chita pool their blankets on the ground. But as you are falling asleep you are aware that they are very, very quiet. And in your dreams that night Tom is not included. You and breasty Chita are quite alone. It is better this way. Tom is fifty-five years older than the girl, and after all you were only twelve when she was born.

On the third day I caught Chita off guard, staring at me appraisingly. She blushed virginally in the matutinal

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light when I discovered her. She saw me for the first time that morning as we washed down native oatmeal paste with hot tea. We exchanged many knowing glances later through the day.

That night, for the first time, Chita made her bed alone, a good ten feet away from Tom, methodically, without comment at all. "Damned if I don't believe she's reformed again," Tom grumbled as he unrolled his dirty blanket.

That night strange southern stars fired up an alien sky, and furtive little orbs of blue light stabbed the darkness on the ground, just feet away. They were made by jaguars circling our camp. The Indian boys kept the fire roaring until the dawn.

Ancohuma and Illampu glowed phosphorescently miles in the distance, snowy backdrop for a hidden moon. We had now arrived on the fringe of the jungle, and would be ready on the morrow to invade the land of inch-long ants, moscos, smallpox, tertiana. Cold hell was left behind, but fire and brimstone lay ahead. I was to learn later which was worse, but on this night nothing seemed to matter at all. Because, as Tom slept restlessly, I heard Chita inching closer to my bed. Suddenly, she held me convulsively. Her damp lips pressing upon my ear, she whispered rapidly, excitedly:

"Tom es muy viejo, pero tu eres joven y simpatico."

I squeezed her hand promisingly. Chita cooed like paloma.

I cursed the bright campfire in Tusuhuayo.

9.

Symptoms in Tuanuni

AS THE CONDOR FLIES, TUANUNI IS A HUNDRED KILOMETERS due north from La Paz; but as the llama goes with the macho the distance is incredible. The thirty kilometers from Sorata to Tuanuni require seven full days over the rawest terrain in the world. We took nine, to wash gravel in the streams for gold, en route.

The first night you camp at Ancoma; the second at Pan y Agua; the third at Tusuhuayo; the fourth at Ocara; the fifth at La Joya; the sixth at Nairapi; the seventh at Tuanuni. These "places" are not five miles apart on your map, but when you reach Tuanuni on the seventh day you have averaged half a mile per hour. You have dropped four miles down from ice to steaming jungle, climbed seven Andean mountains, hacked your way through thirteen tenacled valleys.

Eighty goiter-necked, pock-marked mestizos live along the Tipuani trail, yet each "place," whether tiny finca or lone thatched hut on mountainside or in the valley, suddenly becomes as important to the weary pilgrim as a great capital city to a world voyager. For in Ocara and La Joya, Nairapi and all the rest were yamalote grass for

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mule and llama, fresh water for man and beast, parched corn, fresh bags of coca leaves, a little gossip. What has New York which is more important than these things in Tuanuni?

Lice love cold places higher than Tuanuni, which is where you begin to sense the authority of the jungle, but our original crop acquired on Ancohuma lingered on. Arriving cross, footsore, welt-covered by peoho bites, you thank God that yours are country lice, not infected by typhus like those in La Paz, and you concentrate on the early boiling of your clothes.

We raced two miles per hour toward Tuanuni on the last day before Tipuani. If a hen happened to be old enough or sick enough to kill that day in the village, we might have hot chicken soup on arriving. In this wild land, eggs are used only for hatching, and hens for cooking only when they are half-dead of jungle droop, so there's not much chance at your journey's end of finding chicken à la king. But we raced on nevertheless, spurred by the hope that at least one hen would be suffering merely from blameless old age. Besides, we had to boil our clothes.

As we entered Tuanuni a great hubbub greeted our cavalcade. All the village came out to welcome us—seven women, all with goiters, a pack of six wild, dominantly Indian children, and a dwarfish mestizo boy of ten who carried a heavy superating growth on his neck which required him to walk like Atlas supporting the earth. The huge running sore, as large as a football, forced his head forward and pulled his shoulders up

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awkwardly, and the crust of former eruptions was caked on him in thick and filthy layers.

"He helps his mother in the kitchen," Tom said, as he saw me staring. "Nice lad, but too sick to work the coffee trees."

I couldn't help saying: "I'd rather he'd work somewhere else while I'm around."

Tom looked up at me sharply. There was nothing squeamish about the little old prospector. He found it difficult to understand what was in my mind.

"That sore gets bigger every time I come through," he observed. "Some day they're going to take him to see a doctor in La Paz."

"I still think they should keep him out of the kitchen," I said.

"Why, he's handy as all hell," Tom exploded. "His mother wouldn't know how to get along without him. He'll cook your soup this night. Best little chef you ever saw."

I began to look about me, wondering whether there was any fresh fruit.

Off to the right, an iron pot was steaming with boiling water for our clothes—the same vessel, I discovered later, that the little boy and his mother would use to prepare our evening meal.

Chita was first to throw in her ragged clothes. She stood modestly stripped to her waist like a Bali maiden; only a silken underskirt, a revealing piece of finery from Arica, covered her from her waist to her knees. Tom and all of the Indians went off to the river to wash their

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clothes in cold water with lye soap, and beat them out on worn flat rocks. This would take a long time. My clothes were soon in the pot with Chita's. Shorts would follow later when there were dry pants to wear.

Only the mestizo boy with the sore remained with us to tend the fire. Chita looked at him resentfully. I sat on a rock in the shade of coffee trees. Chita came over to comb the lice from my head, and to do this well, she leaned close.

"Send the wretched boy away," Chita whispered. "The others will not return for hours."

"Not now," I said. "It is too dangerous."

Chita frowned. She did not know what I meant.

I stalled that afternoon in sunny Tuanuni, not because I felt compunctions of any sort, but because Tom had very recently been complaining of symptoms which might mean—anything. In Tuanuni there is no drugstore on the corner.

IO.

Tipuani Turpitude

TIPUANI WAS SNUGLY ENFOLDED BY 500-METER ANDEAN foothills, like a deep crease in a parkerhouse roll. The Tipuani River, fed by melting snow from high above, ran, an icy paradox, through the steaming green jungle village. Along its banks in a score of huts made of frames covered on roof and two sides only with banana leaves, dwelt the people of the valley. Locked by their mountains in a primitive half-paradise, and by their minds shackled to customs born of savage empires, they teetered in their village precariously on the fringe of civilization. Not savages but still savage, neither Bolivian nor Spaniard nor Negro, yet made up of part of all.

Strong blood of black slaves of the Portuguese, driven in a great crime of history across the Matto Grosso to work the mines and die, faintly marked their features and their skin. The Spaniard wandered through and left his evidence behind, as did the Bolivian outlaw, more than one European adventurer, and prospectors from far lands—the traits of these races mixed their contrasting personalities in an alchemy of blood. No wonder their

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customs and creeds were primitive and strange. They were isolated almost completely from the outside world. They were clannish and inbred, and by nature unenterprising. One day leads to another and, under the anodyne of habit, superstitions graduate from beliefs to convictions.

Of the 111 inhabitants of the village of Tipuani, only the young girls were good to look upon. They ranged in age from eleven to fourteen, at which point they were accepted as mature women, and indeed seemed to merit the rank. Long and rangy, as a rule, light of skin and full-breasted, the girls by themselves were gay. They laughed a lot together and swam in deep holes of the river every day when no one was there to see.

Of these maidens there were 19 in the village; of old women there were 22; of middle-aged women, 21; of babies, 8; of seventeen-year-old men in their prime, 11; of aging men of thirty there were 24. Others and relatives lived in neighboring villages, but there were too many young girls for too few young men in Tipuani.

The girls splashed in private and indulged in light, feminine horseplay, out of the sight of their elders only in swimming holes, screened by overhanging jungle growth. For it was unseemly to appear happy in Tipuani in public. Dour expressions were the rule. All wore sour mien as naturally as they did their clothes. This was part of decency itself.

Youth was short. Goiters were certain, early in life. Paludal fever came with the first squawks of infancy when midwives spanked brown bottoms, and the fever

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stayed on as a member of the family until it was buried with the victim in a grave.

Old people of thirty knew their cheerless fate. It had been set in motion years before. Pain from aching teeth was a constant companion of all over eighteen, and when by some chance it went away sometimes for a few brief hours it was likely to be missed like an old friend. Thyroids of all adult women and most men grew like melons from a diet devoid of iodine. When the natives saw a grown woman without a goiter they stared curiously. Angry boils were the natural consequence of monotonous, low-grade food; pellagra, rickets and tuberculosis crowded the medical history of nearly everyone.

Yet youth enjoyed a few golden years. Even the germs coursing through their veins from birth were not enough to bring them down until they started slipping physically after their teens. So, for a few irresponsible years, the nineteen girls of Tipuani could steal away to their swimming holes to laugh and play, safe from the sight and inevitable rebukes of the old people who enjoyed the solemnity of pain.

As to the desirability of a grim visage, the young girls when out of their huts did not agree with their elders, and possibly differed in many other thoughts; but one common ardor—hatred of the white man—was shared by all. In this there was complete unanimity of contempt. He was tabu. The few who came their way were shunned. No new white blood had come into their veins for two hundred years since Portuguese master had lashed black

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cousin, enslaved Indian ancestors, and imposed despised white kinship by rape.

This was what two young white engineers had found when, about a year before our arrival, they came to Tipuani to make a report for a mining company of gold placer possibilities in the wild area. They paid bitterly in lonesome, sexless lives for the abuses of the Portuguese. They lived perforce aloofly in a camp high up on the side of a neighboring mountain—too high for the mosquitoes to fly. .

But when our cavalcade arrived with Chita walking and Tom now riding her mule, part of the social resistance had been broken down by our predecessors. Little by little, tiny gifts from the white men had ingratiated them ever so slightly. For six months the villagers would not even nod in passing; now they bowed stiffly. Two of the older women even climbed the hill once each week and washed the white men's clothes, hanging the shirts on limbs of trees to dry, and received in payment for the washing one Bolivian bill.

The white men were pleased enough with the thawing of the population, and they even began to aspire to a change in laundresses—two of the young girls of the village, preferably the most beautiful.

Many times the men stole down from their hill to hide in leafy trees, and stare hungrily at the beauties in their jungle bath. They swallowed hard and bit their lips as they looked upon a sight as rare as it was wild. These brown and yellow girls ran in a pack—free, savage nymphs, effervescing in their fleeting youth with a wild

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exhilaration, perhaps more unrestrained because it was so limited. In a few short years they would be middle-aged.

Of all the girls, Carmelita was the most daring, yet soft and feminine, and the acknowledged queen. She dived into the river pools from the highest limbs of trees with the careless perfection of a born athlete. Her performance would have excited thousands; it enraptured one. Each day from furtive green shadows Donald, the younger engineer, watched the graceful plunge, and his heart raced madly with uncontrolled desire.

Carmelita became the obsession and the goal of his life. He determined that some day she would come up to his hill and wash his clothes. He plotted his campaign with the cunning of the crazed.

The second in beauty among Tipuani's maids was fourteen-year-old Carmen, timid and shy in contrast to Carmelita. She might have been subdued by the great scandal which her family was still trying to outlive and the village to forget, a burden of remorse which had shaken all their lives. Of twins born to her mother a year before, one of the girls had been white, the other black. Half-miracle throwback to Portuguese and slave, nothing like this had ever happened before to puzzle the minds and confuse the lives of the Tipuani.

Talk went on for days. The elders met to discuss it officially in the night. There was no precedent in all their history to guide them. It was a problem too big to handle. The disgrace weighed heavily; it could not be forgotten, for the cries of the baby twins reminded

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everyone night and day that one of the pair was white.

Finally, a medicine man, wearing for a headpiece a duster of chicken feathers and carrying armfuls of little wooden gods, came from a far tribe to work his magic in the crisis of the twins. The people of Tipuani, who had perhaps one foot on the lowest rung of the ladder of civilization, went back to the dark customs of primitive empire as they floundered in their distress.

The *malgré-lui* (medicine man) sat and stared at the white baby for three days in the sun. When he left the girl was dead. The people buried her in a secret place, and smoothed the grave level with the ground. There was great relief in Tipuani, but it was said that Carmen's mother cried unnecessarily after the medicine man had done his work so well.

The little black twin was welcome enough in the village, and she thrived on all the milk from breasts which once she had shared with a stranger from her mother's womb.

Shy Carmen was the hope of the other engineer, whose name was Frank. He, too, made daily pilgrimage to the pools to watch the girls. He, too, set up elaborate plans to woo his choice. His longings troubled his nights and the image of Carmen was with him always as he tramped the hills and tested soil and shafts for gold.

Tom rode Chita's mule into Tipuani for the simple reason that he could no longer walk. The germs he had acquired in Ancoma's hay had taken full control. Chita

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ran alongside his mule, thoroughly alarmed, and crying pitifully.

"I swear, Tom," she wept, "I didn't know."

She repeated this over and over hysterically, and you believed she told the truth. As she trotted along, reaching pathetically in anguish for the old man's hand, he looked at her half sadly, his brow wrinkled.

"I was a pluperfect goddam fool," he had said to me. "I should have known better. Wouldn't usually trust the Queen of Sheba."

I was remembering again that we were a long way from a drugstore. And a long way from home.

There can be days of sadness as well as excitement on the trail when lonesomeness suddenly sweeps over you, and you feel the mild terror of great distances. You are a futile mite of humanity in a lost land, far from anyone who understands or knows your code. It's deeper than nostalgia. Self-pity, if you please, in a strange and alien world. A million travelers have felt it—it hurts a lot until you throw it off, and many things can bring it on, even little things that remind you startlingly that your kind are far away.

A question from Chita back in Ocara—and now old Tom's disease. In Ocara I had seen Chita biting a piece of bread from a big loaf.

"Benjamin Franklin said," I told her, "'Bite not thy bread with thy teeth; break it first with thy hand.'"

"Who," she asked, "is Franklin?" And she kept on biting.

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Of course Chita would not know. Her history books, if any, were written in the world of Bolivar. Even George Washington is not listed there.

Tom was a landmark of Tipuani. His arrival, alone, would not have been exciting to the two engineers. But the fact that he brought with him (1) a beautiful half-breed girl, and (2) a white male companion put both men in a dither. They raced down the hill from Good Air Camp so excited that they appeared foolish.

When, with binoculars, they first espied from the hill the girl trotting beside old Tom astride his macho, the celibates could hardly restrain themselves. Any woman old Tom had could only be fair quarry, they reasoned wildly. For the moment, Carmen and Carmelita were forgotten. For all they knew, there might be more readily available game. They sped to see.

Tom saw them coming and yelled to the arrieros to stop the llamas. He drew up his macho. Chita held his hand. I stood resting an elbow on the rump of the little mule, and rolled a cigarette.

The engineers came on in a cloud of dust, and reached us out of breath where we waited by the shore of the Tipuani.

Frank was the first one to greet Tom.

"Gee!" he panted. "Where'd you get the gal?"

"She's a beauty," Donald called out. "How about it?"

Tom regarded them disdainfully.

"You're nuts," he said finally. "Anyway, she's no good for you. She's got —." He mentioned a nine-

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letter word. "You guys are always the same. Why in hell didn't you bring along a supply of saltpeter?"

The engineers were taken aback, and seemed abashed.

"Well, by God!" they said in unison. "You must have it too."

"No doubt about that," Tom said. "Help me get up the hill. I've got to get to bed."

Somehow, Tom managed introductions. Chita, still weeping, whimpered some sort of acknowledgment. I shook hands with the two men, who behaved as though the shock of Chita's condition had dazed them. They looked at her uneasily, warily, as we trudged to their camp. One of them kept mumbling that it was just his luck; the other, that still it was hard to believe.

Then and there, the jungle was sad.

II.

Circulation Builder

BOTH OF THE ENGINEERS HAD GRADUATED FROM LELAND Stanford University. Frank was a New Yorker; Donald came from Illinois. Both were from good families, were tall and striking-looking men, half good-looking, but the thing which marked them in the memory of any who saw them in Bolivia's wilds was a hunted look. I mentioned this to Tom later that night, and he said I had it "bassackwards."

"It's not a 'hunted' look," he said. "It's the 'hunting' look. You are fresh out of La Paz and those damned perfumed fans. Stay out here with the Indian women long enough and you'll be the same way. They've been playing a losing game for months."

By Donald's bed was an Episcopal prayer book. Frank had had a Spartan upbringing. All of this provided a contradictory flavor to the goings on in Tipuani. These men were dramatic only because of the jungle setting. In New York or Chicago they would have danced with Child's waitresses or ordered chop suey at Ruby Foo's for a chorus girl and thought themselves great shakes with the ladies.

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Both men long before had lost their sense of humor. They were nervous and irritable. Frustration here had done something Freudian. Donald and Frank now would make a good chapter for Kraft-Ebbing. They were as psychopathic as the goitered people who made the worst of things down below in the village of Tipuani.

"One trip to La Paz," Tom commented, "would fix them up, but they can't make it until their five test shafts are sunk."

Both men, under contract to a La Paz gold-mining syndicate, were held prisoners by their contract. When we arrived the agony of handling indifferent Indian labor had already prolonged their stay by months. Only two shafts had been completed, neither according to specifications. Testing the cangali soil of the area for proper operations caused further delays. Week after week dragged by, time spent in coaxing and cajoling long-haired aborigines to handle strange picks and shovels, and exasperating failures when once they did.

The engineers had long since learned to be grateful when their employees would drive a foot a day into the gravel. This progress was not often accomplished, and then only when the natives were running out of coca, which was the sole wage for which they would toil.

The hip-booted engineers roamed far into the hills searching for likely spots to sink their shafts, but secretly despaired of ever completing the contract. Letters frantically dispatched to the capital for city labor received but little encouragement from officials and friends. Two discharged Bolivian soldiers suffering from tuber-

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culosis because of exposure to the Chaco lowlands, and both wounded in the bargain, limped into Tipuani one day in response to the appeals, but they proved little better than the natives. Finally they were sent back when their health broke down completely.

Stories of the wild land which have always been circulated in the city made it impossible for the white men to lure able-bodied workmen who knew the value of currency. The tubercular ex-soldiers braved the wilderness only because they thought nothing could possibly be worse than the hellish triangle of Chaco territory bordered by the Pilcamayo and Paraguay rivers. But in many respects they found that they were wrong.

When Tom's cot was finally pitched on the hill and Chita helped, the men's eyes still followed her hungrily. Chita seemed self-conscious under their stares. Tom noticed it.

"Damned if I don't believe you'd take a chance, anyway," he said to them. "Why don't you forget it and go to sleep?"

The engineers grinned sickeningly, and their faces turned the color of verdigris, but they soon obeyed.

Frank was thirty-two, Donald twenty-nine. Both men, baked for years by the fierce jungle sun, seemed ten years older than their age. You get to know something about companions out in the jungle in a hurry—things which would take a lifetime to learn back in civilization. And you knew that here were two men who could not be fairly judged in the environment of a wild greenhouse; and one sense the jungle gives you is to leave well

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enough alone. Let others judge them. I found them amusing at times, helpful always. When I was forced to stay on in Tipuani awaiting Tom's return with Chita, they remembered long-forgotten rules of hospitality, and were always considerate and human, except when the laundry girls came by. Those were the times their characters weaved to extremes, but proved that they were "civilized."

They played the game the white man's way, with the jungle as a testing ground. The same game is being played back in civilization every hour of the day, but other things there take the place of the ironing board, and the effort is not as agonizing and prolonged.

Tropic winds which waft lazy through the valley and softly spank perspiring native gold washers like a heated fan, also bring the things which give them tertiana. The victims believe that the breezes, every third day, carry supernatural powers to strike them down. So every seventy-two hours, when they remember the curse, they will dodge the windy places and cover the openings of their huts with banana leaves.

Some of the populace were resigned to their fate, and did nothing. Others were badly frightened. A minority was defiant, and these even sometimes shook their fists angrily into a healthy current of air and called it names. Still others called for the Callaguayas' empirical ministrations of herbs. Those who were true to the faith of their fathers summoned one of the varieties of charlatans. These men believe all illness is caused by something which has "entered" the body. The first twinge of pain

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indicates the sucking treatment—for snake bite, belly-ache, anything. When something has entered, it has to come out. Tom insisted this made damned good sense.

But despite any treatments or conjurations, a number of the natives every three days were seized with paroxysms and burned with fever until they shook it off, or finally died. None of them ever heard that intermittent fever got its name from the Latin word, *tertius*, which means three, but they insisted that the ague came every seventy-two hours riding a saddle of baleful winds.

The engineers first pitched their cots on the banks of the Tipuani where mosquitoes flew in black clouds around the clock. Mosquitoes work twenty-four hours a day in the jungle, and there the white men were tormented in the day time while they worked and spent their nights swatting at invaders which found the small mesh of their nets wide-open doors. But when the engineers followed streams into the hills as high as 500 meters from the valley, the mosquitoes suddenly vanished. That's the reason Good Air Camp was built—on a spot too high for the tormenting winged things to fly. Five hundred meters up, and you were out of the bug belt and safe from thirsty stings.

Only a few of the natives believe the mosquito is responsible for their ills. The majority believe her harmful only because she sucks their blood, and in a country where anemia is almost universal, blood is a precious thing. In jungle Bolivia thousands of natives eat mosquitoes to restore it to their veins. Most of the mosquito eaters of Bolivia allow the insect to drink her fill to the

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bursting point before plucking her from their flesh.

"The reason for this," Tom said, "is because when left alone for a while the mosquito becomes so heavy with blood she can't take off. The damned fool native, when he eats the thing, thinks he has lost nothing because none of his blood has flown away."

Indians of the Beni land actually come to like the taste of the blood-laden insect, and are surprised that anyone could be revolted by the practice.

Mosquitoes which drove the engineers to the hill also were responsible for the introduction of the first porcelain john to the jungle of South America. Llamas and Indians toiled mightily to bring the thing over the cordilleras from La Paz after Donald and Frank had ambitiously constructed a large, two-room adobe house and decided on plumbing to make it complete. They ran the water through a canal from a spring above the house, and stored it in a reservoir hollowed in the ground.

The arrival of the modern contraption among the natives was sensational. It was stared at in wonder. Curiosity was so great that twenty-one of the men and women of the community fell over each other and volunteered in a scramble to carry it up the winding path to the lofty throne room. When its purpose was explained to them the simple people shook their heads and were more bewildered than ever by the white man's peculiar ways.

Sewerage disposal was accomplished by building a two-mile-long V-shaped board trough from the outhouse to the Tipuani River, which infuriated the gold washers who had rich gravel beds near the outlet. They

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continued their labors for a while, but were soon driven away as the traffic of candidates to experiment with the machinery made their work in the vicinity unbearable.

Tom estimated that the arrival of the john ruined a gravel bed worth a potential 10,000 bills, possibly the most expensive john in the history of South America. However, the psychological value of its presence on the hill seemed more than to compensate for the other modern things the white men had sacrificed in their exile, and from the day it was installed the engineers seemed more content than ever before.

While the john was still a nine-day wonder, natives who stood in line to enter the mysterious door would pull the chain quickly and run out to the trough to race the cargo down the hill. In this sport they were often joined by other shouting, whooping Tipuanians who waited outside expectantly like runners on a line for the onrush of water to start a wild stampede. The white men regarded this with euphemistic tolerance, and anyway, it was the only fun the elder natives ever had.

Finally, however, so many of them came, men and women of every age, some carrying children and young babies, that special "visitors' day" of necessity were set aside for the villagers. This plan failed to work, too, since on such designated periods the turnouts represented 100 per cent of the population and much bad feeling was caused among life-long friends who tripped over each other trying to rush the gong. Several ankles were sprained, and at least one baby was trampled under

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oot. The reservoir invariably ran dry on these occasions, and pieces of old Chicago *Tribunes* and Washington *Times-Heralds*, brought into the wilderness as wrapping paper, floated like snow down the Tipuani River to its confluence with the Rio Kaka in Huanay.

So even "visitors' day" was eventually eliminated, and the use of the john restricted to the alcalde, members of his family and visiting German and Latvian prospectors and those of Anglo-Saxon descent.

The harsh decision, which deprived the villagers of their sport, at least restored some calm and peace to Good Air Camp. The occupants now who wished to laze in hammocks did not have their conversation drowned out by natives playing the game of john. Now you could lie in a hammock stretched between two giant cedar trees and hold the hand of Chita, or read a torn page from Fifi Stillman's defunct *Panorama Magazine* on the "History of Buttons, an interview with Captain Molyneux."

The building which housed the john was built of rough-hewn boards, and boasted a door hung by rope hinges, and a fancy peaked roof to protect the priceless machinery from dew and rain. The engineers facetiously sawed quarter moons on either side wall.

The camp site was on a high table of the green foothills, overlooking the valley, with a good view of Ancohuma covered with eternal snow, ten heart-breaking days away. When men are foolish enough to climb over the cordilleras to the jungle valleys of Bolivia, they stay much longer than originally planned because they are

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never quite sure they can endure the return trip to Sorata.

On clear days, the sun played on Ancohuma's ice, stabbing the mirrored surface like a heliograph sending imaginary messages to lonesome souls. The heavenly hand which moved the sun sometimes flashed calls to leave the wilds, but you could read the code any way you wished, according to your own particular plans. For Tom and me it was a phantasmagoria, spelling out the words we wished to see—Fawcett, curare, the Beni land.

These were days you let your fancy play, and they did not come often because Ancohuma was usually hidden by the mist which curled darkly upward in whipped cream clouds.

The kitchen of Good Air Camp was built in the rear of the house flush against a sheer rock boulder twenty feet high. This shielded the fire from prevailing winds, and also provided a rear wall. The "stove" was a flat piece of steel measuring four feet by four, placed over four stone pillars built up three feet from the ground. This required the cook to squat awkwardly while preparing the meals. No one ever tried to figure out why the stove had not been built higher for the comfort of the cook, but if the engineer ever thought about it at all, nothing was done to change it. The steel plate became red-hot whenever a meal was prepared, and in the night, when seen from a distance on the higher trail, glowed like a full moon which had fallen upon the mountain-side. The shelter which covered the stove consisted of

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a banana-leaf roof supported in front by two long poles, the rear being fastened to the boulder. The only wall was provided by the rock background.

Meals for everyone were served in Donald's large room. This was separated from Frank's by a wall which reached only six feet high, leaving, for ventilation, an opening of three feet between its top and the ceiling. This caused some disturbing complications, because while the opening admitted a circulation of air, it provided little privacy. The engineers lived for the day when Carmen and Carmelita would move in, and after talking it over, decided to forego ventilation in favor of privacy, and the wall was eventually closed to the ceiling. When the sound-proofing was accomplished, the men seemed happier over their long-range plans than at any time since the house was built. The house itself was colored with a ruby tint from the garnet sand of the area, was tight and snug from without as well as from within, and somehow gave the feeling of being the only solid thing in the wilderness.

Chita found a place for my cot out of earshot of Tom's not far away. She slept in a hammock close by, and fixed her mosquito net cleverly on overhanging limbs of the trees, tucking its ends under her blanket. Although she was assured there were no mosquitoes on the hill, the use of the net was too ingrained for her to sleep without it anywhere. When Chita retired, her hammock, with the net suspended irregularly over it in the trees, looked much like a globular wasp's nest hanging from a bough.

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The camp was a leafy place, and cozy too. At night, all of us would gather about a camp fire and talk of everything, or sometimes we talked not at all, and silently watched the twinkling lights of the village down below as far away as another world.

The laundry campaign, at last, had worked—to some extent. Carmen and Carmelita now came regularly to the camp to do the engineers' washing, but this was all. Their seduction, in spite of every cunning plan, seemed as remote as it was when the very thought of their speaking to a white man was crazy stuff indeed. The engineers had offered the girls everything. Bales of bills, pounds of gold, bribery, cajolery, flattery, gross and subtle, had availed nothing in the battle of the sexes in Tipuani. The engineers still were celibate (from a local standpoint) and the long-legged girls true to the jungle code. There the white man's embrace was last on a list that included much.

The game, however, went on. New moves were plotted daily and the Anglo-Saxons watched eagerly for a weakening of resolve, a sign, some little reaction or mood of the jungle maidens to encourage the chase. Not that it needed prodding. Devices of every kind were never lacking. Never did you see such cleanly engineers. They even changed the laundry schedule by holding out shirts and trousers and digging discarded clothes from duffelbags. This increased the already surprising volume of the laundry until soon there were three weekly washings instead of one. This meant that Carmen and Car-

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melita trudged up the hill to Good Air Camp thrice oftener than had their goitered mothers. Propinquity was a strong crutch upon which the feverish hopes of the Americanos del Norte leaned.

Old Tom was fairly disgusted with it all. "They could have had their mothers with half the effort, but they don't like goiters, see. What's wrong with a goiter, anyway? It's like a third breast."

His disdain raged chiefly over the artful placing of pots and washboards which the engineers mapped precisely like a mine shaft. They located the work benches on a steep slope commanded by bushy vantage points above and below. Above was a flowering, leafy tree in which they hid to watch the maidens' labors from on high. Below was a luxuriant cluster of high jungle grass where they could conceal themselves and stare upward.

Once I had known a doctor in La Paz who had examined every nude curve of a lovely lady professionally, impersonally. Yet, when a gust in the Plaza one day ballooned her skirt above her knee the medico saw and felt sudden, uncontrollable desire. After that, he was so unnerved by her visits to his office he was forced to give her up as a patient.

"It's the same psychology," I said to Tom.

"Psychology, hell!" he grunted. "Is there any psychology to a burlesque show?"

At night, with our camp close by the engineers' dwelling, we sat by fires under lanterns strung on wires in treetops. Chita had been nursing Tom constantly since

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our arrival in Tipuani, applying cold compresses of spring water to his swollen parts. The next day he was scheduled to start on the long trip back to Sorata.

Chita was jumpy. She, too, had to say good-bye that night and face the long trek on the morrow. She whistled, yawned, hummed. From a box she had brought forth a brassière of sixteenth-century rose-point duchesse lace, the last bit of finery left from her prosperous days in the Arica brothel. She wore this, uncovered, with a skirt of puffed lines which flowed in billowing ripples, reminiscent of styles of the Seminoles. This is Cholo style, too, and a long way from the Everglades of Florida—Chita's bra came from Belgium to Italy to Chile. "Must have cost a hundred men," Donald said.

We watched Chita that night in her incongruous clothes playing nervous Florence Nightingale. There was something disturbing about her presence, but she was, for the time being, tabu.

No one talked about their long trip to Sorata. Instead, we spoke of fishing. The engineers, now somewhat calmed after a day of staring at the girls weaving over scrubbing boards, planned to torture themselves anew on a fishing excursion near the pools where all of Tipuani's belles on the next day would steal away to laugh and swim, and they to watch.

Men talk about everything out in the jungle where there is little salt, no books, and no available women. You soon know it is sad talk, and lonesome, forced talk. Some of it is smart talk. Whatever it is, it is close to hysterical talk. Mostly it is about sex, sometimes about re-

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mote, remembered politics, and sometimes food. This time, the conversation turned to powdered Klim (which is milk spelt backward). Klim is important in the jungle to the diet of a man rich enough to get it in. In Tipuani a can of Klim is almost priceless. The engineers had Klim. I had a *Harper's Bazaar*.

It was an ancient copy, picked up in my *Tercero* cabin when we landed in B.A. so long ago. One page of it I tore out to preserve some precious, used razor blades. The rest I tossed unthinkingly into a suitcase. It was an impulse which later rocked an empire of red men.

In the jungle magazines are as rare as Klim. An important business deal got under way. When I dug that year-old compendium of fashion from a canvas bag, and clutched in turn a ten-cent can of dried-up milk, the swap changed the lives of everyone in Tipuani, and as far north as Ixiamas.

The very next morning Carmelita and Carmen came again to Good Air Camp. Donald was leaning back in a canvas chair reading his *Harper's Bazaar*. The back cover advertised cosmetics. It was red and blue and there were shades of green, and cupid-curved vermilion lips. A beautiful girl in a bridal gown adorned the front, her flowing white veil swept over long blond hair and bled off the page through a background of pink blossoms through which cupids flew.

Donald whistled. Carmelita looked. He motioned for her to come over to him, as he had done a thousand times. For the thousandth time she shook her head, and smiled because she knew the game. But this time she

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shook her head, not fast, as usual, but slowly, staring at the book in Donald's hands. Finally, she walked toward him, curious. Donald's heart raced. She came on, eyes fixed on the picture of the bride. Fear of the white man was swept away by that kind of curiosity that makes sisters of all women. A brown jungle girl saw for the first time in her life the picture of a white wife, and the latest thing a bride will wear, fresh from couturiers of Paris. Kinship and spell of Eve took control, an ageless instinct—the mystery, if you please, of women, or perhaps it was something as simple as a stick of red candy for a child.

Carmelita soon had the book in her hands. Pages flew as she raced them with her thumb, revealing the latest lacy things from the salons of Lelong, the creations of Suzy, of Molyneux, Patou, Schiaparelli and Lanvin.

She sighed happily. There were little gurgles of delight, exclamations of surprise. Donald took Carmelita by the arm, and still looking hungrily at the pages, the virgin jungle girl who had refused a thousand bills and gold for months on end, followed him into his house.

Carmen outside heard her sob for a moment; then all was very quiet and still. Carmen did all the washing that day and did not interfere. Even from afar she, too, had glimpsed the *Harper's Bazaar*, and must have understood.

Mail and supplies come to Tipuani several times a year for the engineers. The next shipment was due in a month, with vital supplies of food, equipment and medicines. But when the llamas finally were seen coming over

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the hills, trotting daintily, a large portion of their load was devoted to old *Vanity Fairs*, *Vogues*, *Harper's Bazaars*, *Mademoiselles* and other similar periodicals. They were piled high upon the backs of the little pack "camels" to the full extent of the eighty-kilo limit a llama will carry.

The Ruminating Cameloid

I HAD SEEN LLAMAS BEFORE I WENT TO BOLIVIA, OF course. I'd passed them in the zoo on my way to the leopard house, but I'd never paid much attention to them. I felt definitely that I could take my llama or leave it alone. In Bolivia I learned otherwise. A llama is not a creature to be ignored.

This little brother of the camel, with soulful eyes and a spiteful, melancholy disposition, was a spitting and irritable pack animal even when King Tutankhamen was a small boy in Africa. The llama's history is older than the Incas, since science says it was domesticated by patient primitive Indians long before superior civilizations made their marks with temples on the landscapes of the Andes.

The same remote ancestor which made the biblical camel brought the llama to the world, but somewhere in the mist of tadpole time the llama climbed a differentadder and lost its hump. It developed, instead, the feet

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of a bird of prey and the neigh of a horse, as well as high-strung nerves. It became the freight train of the mountain land, the camel of South America, an instrument of commerce which only the Indians have the patience to use.

To deprive Bolivia of the llama would be to ruin a nation already staggering under heavy loads. The loss of this beast would shatter the economy of red men and cause a tragedy too acute even for a Bolivian to dare contemplate. You meet the creatures by thousands, bearing their small burdens along the trails of almost impassable country in Bolivia and Peru.

I learned about these beasts from old Tom and a hundred Indians who drove their woolly trains through the heights, and in Huanay a Callaguaya specialist showed me more. Llamas are fascinating and repulsive, and as contradictory as the land in which they dwell. The animal has a disposition like a fishwife, and is as temperamental as an aging prima donna. It is instinctively hated by the white man and reciprocates the sentiment with an emphasis of spittle if annoyed in any way. The llama will gaze at its annoyer with deep and sorrowful eyes—and then eject an accurate stream of vile-smelling, poisonous, acid saliva for several feet, which, if it finds its mark, will cause the skin of the victim to blister instantly and follow with slow-healing sores. When the animal stages these outbursts it stamps its feet in great annoyance, and resembles a cranky old man tapping his cane peevishly because his coffee is cold.

But it is a rare thing for the same animal to aim its

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noxious stream toward its Aymara masters and friends.

Only the Indians love the llama. They breed them, feed them and treat them well. And the llama loves only the Indian—a strange affinity.

The Indians say the llama descended from the hare, as did the desert camel. The only resemblance it has to the rabbit, however, is in the shape of its mouth.

But the similarity between the llama and its big brother of the desert is too striking to doubt the kinship—with the exception of the hump, the llama is definitely in a big sense a miniature camel himself. The sculptor's hand slipped somewhere as he molded the animal in the march of time, but left the llama more camel than deer, which it resembles; or sheep, whose wool it wears; or hare, from which it got its mouth; or falcon, which gave it a claw on its feet; or horse, which imparted its neigh. The sculptor, a million years ago, used some seductive cave woman as a model for the llama's great sad eyes. The devil himself endowed it with cantankerous traits scarcely equaled anywhere in the animal kingdom. The llama's spitting habit came out of a filthy witch's cauldron somewhere along the line, giving the otherwise defenseless animal a weapon as sharp as the fury of a water buffalo.

You cannot escape the story heard on every side in South America that the llama is universally syphilitic; that it acquired the taint from sodomitical womanless soldiers of Pizarro. The story may be based on fact, but again it may have been started on its way by victims who thought their sores and blisters from its spit were

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chancrous. Tom believes they have it, but when pinned down for proof, dismisses the questioner. "Who the hell," he asks with a philosophical shrug, "is going to give a llama a Wassermann test in the Andes?"

True or not, this legend now protects the llama as much as his accurate stream of spittle. Curious white men shy away from him because of it, and playful boys who might otherwise throw taunting stones his way, leave the nervous beast religiously alone.

While the camel can be loaded down with great weight until he buckles in the middle, and will not protest, no straw will ever break a llama's back. The little brother of the camel, is far too smart for that. Though otherwise he displays little evidence of intelligence, the llama knows exactly how much he can carry and how far he can carry it. He will suffer a beating unto death before he will proceed a foot under a pack which he considers too weighty for him to bear comfortably. This weight varies according to the height and power of the beast, but the average is usually 100 pounds. Some llamas which tower six feet from the falcon's claw to their long, nervously twitching ears, carry as much as 130 pounds, but this is an exceptional load. The llama, too, knows when he is tired, and will stop on the trail at will until he has rested. No amount of prodding will make the obdurate, cud-chewing hodge-podge of a thing budge an inch when he has done a stint of ten miles. The llama travels immense distances, but in short stretches.

Like the camel, he can exist for days without water,

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subsisting only on the dew mixed with blackened grass graced from patches in icy hills. Like the camel, too, he is a ruminant, chewing his cud at a rapid pace as he trots daintily along torturous trails. His tail, on which is the only hair he has, is carried tucked between his legs when walking, though he holds it erect when frolicking on the stockade. The llama works, but knows his task is menial, and cringes with his tail like a dog that has cause for shame.

No estimate of the llama would be fair without adding up its virtues, too, though these are said to benefit only the Indian. For the Indian, however, in the mountains of South America, the llama is what the ship of the desert is for the Arab. The llama provides meat for the Indian's belly and clothes for his back, and the female fills the herdsman's jars with milk. Chewing coca and trotting along behind their trains, Indian drivers can frequently be seen snatching a patch of wool from llamas' backs and carding it as they go. Each time this is done the master spits a quid of green coca cud upon a rock or cliff for luck. Millions of such spots seen along the cruel trails of Bolivia and Peru attest to the amazing industry and superstition of the Indian men as they push along to a destination spurred by the dope of the oval leaves.

Only the male llama is worked. The females are kept at home for breeding. Most of the milk is required for the kid, but sometimes the llama has enough left over for babies and the aged. The milk is rich and heavy and

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cannot be distinguished from some varieties of sheep's milk. It is good enough in coffee, but is too oily for the average North American palate, taken straight.

The guanaco, vicuña and alpaca are South American cousins of the llama, and the meanest of these is the alpaca. Whereas the llama spits a poisonous stream when angered, the male alpaca ejects a heavy, stinking cud at the object of his wrath with such force that the messy projectile splashes disgustingly over the face of the victim like a bug on the windshield of a racing automobile. In ancient days these beasts—llama, guanaco, vicuña and alpaca—were graded into castes. The domesticated llamas provided the clothes of slaves, and the alpaca the robes of royalty.

The llama is the only domesticated native animal of South America, and the most gallantly prancing beast of any land. It would be difficult to imagine greater poetry of motion than expressed by the animal as it dances over boundless expanse of its difficult terrain. If a visitor in ignorance of its obnoxious fault watches the llama from the lee side, he invariably feels great admiration for this peculiar cameloid.

Llamas endure the high country with more fortitude than any other quadruped except his cousins, the vicuña, alpaca, and guanaco—that is, if he is traveling free of a load. When packed to his limit by Indian drivers he will tremble in soroche heights like the macho, at 16,000 feet or higher. Consequently, many arrieros when driving their woolly freight trains in such altitudes, frequently

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rub their faces with garlic and goat marjoram, which they believe help the beast better to navigate the dizzy heights.

Often, when llamas are encountered in the hot, low valleys after such anointments above, they herald their approach from afar, especially if the wind is blowing in the right direction, giving off an odor as strong as that which wafts from the kitchen of an Italian restaurant. Some of the natives mix the garlic and marjoram with melted tallow candles, and the ointment clings to the wool months on end. Frequent fresh applications condemn many llamas to permanently exude obnoxious odors, and crude clothes made by the Indians from their wool over which the smelly ungent has been spread, retain the scent for the life of the garment.

But unselfconscious natives, whose own faces and hair are often treated with the garlic paste, are sublimely unaware of their own malodeur. In the cold, forbidding heights of the Andes this scent is somewhat controlled by the temperature, but anywhere the thermometer climbs even to 50 degrees Fahrenheit, the presence of these men or beasts is as nauseous as veta itself.

The llama's odor is not the only thing which warns of his approach. He is equipped with neck bells, which tinkle cheerfully as he trots before the train. He can be seen from afar, dressed like a Christmas tree with tassels of gaily-colored wool tied on his restless ears.

The llama is as much a part of South America as the Andean vertebræ of half a hemisphere. Only in this land is he at home, and only in Bolivia and Peru is he in his

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real element. He was domesticated in the heights before the Incas learned to bake clay pots, and with his falcon's claw was gripping rocky crags when the continent was ripped off from the side of Africa in Triassic days.

And only there will he ever be at home. Efforts to transplant the llama, like those made with the camel, have ended in failure in nearly every part of the world. When llamas were brought to the United States in 1867, they failed to thrive because the food was too rich for their blood. The llama likes a parched black stubby grass he finds in the frigid places of the high country of South America. If you want to kill a llama, feed him well. Every zoo keeper from the Bronx to California knows this, some too well. And many in South America who have had his spit sear their flesh would like nothing better than to provide all llamas with huge good meals.

The few llamas which were sent to the Southern States to take the place of the mule, drove the residents crazy. The silly beasts which responded only to orders in Quechus dialect had never heard of "gee" and "haw." They would not eat green grass of Virginia's rich pastures and churlishly refused to budge when the slaves loaded them too heavily. When the last one died of overeating simple hay, the owners breathed a sigh of relief. Since those days, llamas have been brought to the United States only for circuses and zoos, and it is just as well.

So, sing ho, Beni!

13.

The Plague of Moscos

THE DAY THAT TOM AND CHITA DEPARTED, THE DAY THAT saw the capitulation of Carmelita, was a momentous one in the history of Tipuani. With it came the ominous and presageful descent of the moscos.

These power-diving insects with velvet tongues sweep down in great swarms to plague the jungle people with a new kind of pain. They plunge beneath the skin and take residence, quickly, silently and, frequently, for a time unnoticed. In fact, the victim may be unaware that his epidermis is inhabited until the invader dies and rots beneath his flesh, leaving a thousand eggs to hatch, and the skin to rage with pain. The torture lasts for several days until the new-born bugs emerge and fly away.

The attack of the mosco is never fatal, but it is a curse that is almost impossible to avoid and is very hard to bear. No wonder that the natives view it as the work of malevolent fate, and look always for some offender on whom to blame the plague.

For the coming of the mosco is an omen to the people of Beni land. On its wings rides the shadow of the Pass-

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over, it is the black cat of the jungle—an Old Testament curse, the visitation of locusts, the killing of the first-born—it is vengeance from on high in the land where the pan pipes play and the peccary and armadillo roam the acres of a lost world. This calls for the shaman, the medicine man, the *malgré-lui*. This calls for high magic; this calls for sacrifice.

Carmelita, at dusk on this fateful day, still tightly grasping her precious *Harper's Bazaar*, encountered the mosco swarm a hundred meters down the trail from Good Air Camp as she hurried home with Carmen.

At first, they were merely a nuisance. She brushed them off. She had been happy, skipping, humming, laughing down the trail. A great discovery had pleased her well—but suddenly a thought struck her and her mind was quickly filled with dread. Carmen stopped beside her on the trail. The same thought had come to her.

"The mosco is here again," she whispered, as she grasped the arm of Carmelita. "That means someone has sinned."

"Who could have sinned?" asked Carmelita quickly.

Then the jungle girl clapped a hand to her mouth to stop an involuntary scream.

Carmen drew away; her eyes were puzzled for a moment. She stared at the trembling girl. Then, "It's you," she whispered. "*You* have brought the moscos to Tipuani."

Carmelita knew the tribal rule. Carmelita was a brave girl.

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"I'll confess," she said simply. "This will help the Hacha-tata drive the curse away."

With the zeal of a martyr she sped toward the village.

The last time the moscos had come Carmen's mother had given birth to twins, and one of them was white. The time before there had been three miscarriages in the village in a week. Another time when the moscos came, death had struck twice in a day. The alcalde's youngest son had fallen into the Tipuani River and drowned. An old woman who by the word of a Kolliri priest had six months to live, had passed away strangely, much earlier than the prophecy ordained.

The Hacha-tata, the Laika, the Yatiri and the Kolliri—medicine men shamen, who were called from pure Aymara tribes far away—did their biggest magic on these occasions to fight the plague. Little wooden gods, big wooden gods, peccary teeth, crowns of chicken feathers placed on high poles in the center of the village—all these did not avail. Manifestly, something was wrong.

"Someone," they finally announced, "has sinned. Our powers are lost until the wicked one comes to confess before us."

There was a great clamor for a confession. Pressure was brought on many suspects to force a plea of sin, but none could seem to recall anything unusual, and the priests sat idle for four days, eating very well. On the fifth the cow of the alcalde dropped a dead calf, and the moscos flew away.

"We could have saved the calf," the shamen said, "had we known the sinner."

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The priests then gathered up their fees of gold and a litter of young roasting puppies and went back to their tribe with the warning that next time they would expect more cooperation—and also a cow.

When the priests left, the natives worked on each other much like red spider monkeys, picking the moscos' eggs from inflamed skin with metal and wood darts. When the holes left by this surgery heal the spot looks much like a disfiguring pock mark which never goes away.

So the seduction of Carmelita by Donald, the Americano, was a secret only for an hour after she yielded for the tattered magazine of fashion. Carmen had known that Carmelita was happy because she had heard her singing on the trail. Carmen enviously wondered what she had missed, until the moscos blasted her vicarious thrill. Tribal superstitions were deeply rooted in the girl. Sex was new and thrilling, but black magic was old and shaman lore blacked out thoughts of joy. She, too, ran to the hut to save the tribe with a confession of sin—one to which she was virtually a witness if not an accomplice.

The sounds of the jungle carry far at night, and distant noises reach even the ears of a white man. The roar from Tipuani, the beating of drums and shoutings of outraged elder Tipuanians which greeted Carmelita's confession echoed clearly up at the 500-meter-high Good Air Camp where Donald and I were getting ready for bed.

Donald knew the jungle. Something unusual was happening down below. He buckled his pistol belt and

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called on me to join him. I fastened the luger around my waist, and followed the engineer toward the bedlam below.

Lights flickered in the valley. Man-made sounds mingled with the tenor keys of bursting nature, as flies were born, trees and brush grew loudly, armies of night things of the jungle came from under wet logs, from big stones, from the trees, emerged in steaming swamps and marsh, from holes in the hills, from caves like *Todo del Mundo* and *Camino Real*. Big things with phosphorous eyes you never see in the day, growled a bass note for the symphony of the steaming jungle night. This cacophony came from a lost world crawling in slime and blended this moment with the furious noises of the anger of man.

Excited voices carried high through the hills, drums throbbed, Pan pipes whined, runners plunged down paths toward *Sarampiuni*, their trail lighted by fireflies and the big moon patchily luminous through the heavy fronds above them. Near *Sarampiuni* they would find the medicine men. The shame of *Carmelita* had brought the plague of moscos, and this time it was no undiscovered sin that summoned them to such dire work as the provocation of miscarriages, drownings and the birth of a dead calf. The shamen now had something to work on.

The roar from the throats of men and the night chords of a great insect world shook living green things from the trees.

Donald and I now were close to the village. Donald

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was all for rushing in, but he knew as well as I that any attempt at rescue would be futile, and the consequences more than unpleasant for us both. He listened impatiently to reason. We watched unseen. Moscos dug into our flesh painlessly.

Carmelita was surrounded by wailing women, their goiters shaking like cold jelly, by bawling babies and older children, by frenzied men who screamed and danced about, hopping jerkily, first on one foot, then on the other. The bedlam assumed a pattern. The sway, the chant, the rhythm somehow seemed vaguely familiar. I felt that I had seen this before, impossible as it was.

I asked a question of the engineer.

"It's Harlem," he said. "They've got lots of it in them after all."

Yes, it was Harlem all right, or Basin Street, New Orleans, or Beale Street, Memphis, or a cotton patch in Mississippi. Plain to see, it was Porgy and Bess, Ol' Man River—this out in the Bolivian jungle five hundred years from Roark Bradford's Buddy Bolden land of the Blues. It was levee stuff, and Portuguese, mestizo and Indian slave, but the strongest of these was Negro. The black magic of the red man bossed their lives, but their black blood ruled their rhythm.

The dancing, moaning and wailing lasted throughout the night. In the morning the shamans came, the Hachata, the Laika, the Yatiri, the Kolliri—all priests of varying degrees of importance. The runners led them into the village, a delegation larger than had ever gath-

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ered before, for the moscos roared and a Tipuani belle had confessed to important sin.

Top-heavy green parrot feathers waved from the ears of the Hacha-tata, quills stuck through long slits in the lobes gyrating crazily each time he moved his head. He was crowned with red wing plumage of fighting cocks fashioned as a circlet suggestive of England's tenth-century royal coronet, like King John "Lackland" wore. This crown of cock feathers was tightly fitted over his long hair, which was unplaited and fell in black and greasy turmoil over his shoulders. His hands were long, sensuous, soft—unlike the leathery, work-hardened palms of the natives who swayed before his spell.

For the purification rites he honored the occasion by wearing a pair of long, gray trousers made of coarse sheep wool. His feet were sandaled with leather strips held on Chinese-fashion. His torso was naked; on his hairy chest the overlord of medicine men with scissor rocks had patterned bare islands as large as dollars, giving it the appearance of brown dominoes.

The Kolliri, the Yatiri, the Malgré-lui wore simple G strings, nothing more. The hair of these lesser priests, cut short, was undecorated and unbound. The Callaguaya wore a skull cap like the yamalke of the synagogues, covering of orthodox Jews when they are in the presence of the Lord. It was a single, molded piece of llama skin. All, except the Hacha-tata, had streaked long and wide white lines with river clay the circumference of their nude bellies, to distinguish them from the mere mortals who resided in the valley.

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Except for the Hacha-tata, the Callaguaya alone wore clothes. These were homespun gray trousers made from llama wool, and shirts of the same material, without collars and with short sleeves, designed by native women. These mysterious men of herbs were barefooted, the soles of their feet toughened like leather by thousands of miles of walking or trotting behind their llamas across the frontiers of many departments and several nations.

All of the priests were crazed with cocaine—not the relatively mild juices of the coca leaf mixed with lime or ash—but by the heart and soul of the weed, the stuff which makes it tick, distilled by the Callaguaya and concentrated over fires in an earthen bowl.

The Hacha-tata was lighter and taller than the other priests, a gaunt, rangy man with clune blood. The Yatiri and the Kolliri were short, squat, stocky, with slightly bowed legs which made them look almost Japanese when they walked. Copper-colored skin stretched tightly over high cheekbones and forehead. These men were part Aymara, but the blood of other tribes also ran in their veins. Only the Callaguayas, who were of their pure, original stock, had steadfastly, strangely shunned the jungle's melting pot in a vocation which had brought them close association with every branch of South America's original men for a thousand years.

The Callaguaya seemed more kindly than his fellow performers. Lighter of color, more intelligent-looking, his features were large and open. His appearance gave a contradictory spark of sanity to the weird proceedings, where fierce, demoniac lights from all other eyes

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at any moment might actually illumine the scene and challenge the flames of the fire.

Great and mysterious things were indicated. Toucan feathers and peccary-tooth magic would not suffice in Carmelita's case. Her tribe could only be saved by "purification" of the girl herself—only then would the moscos leave and lives be spared. Black-magic history would soon be made. Donald and I sensed all of these things as we kept vigil through the night.

No one had slept in Tipuani. The tireless natives chewed coca leaves by the handful. The drug provided stimulation for a great pace. The unending, unchanging tempo of body-weaving and the sing-song of a community moan was fascinating, contagious and wild. The cadence hypnotized—out here in Bolivia where surely the boogie woogie was born, or at least its mongrel granddaddy.

When the Hacha-tata arrived behind the runners leading the lesser priests, he signaled for quiet. The shock of sudden silence made our white senses reel. The jungle hushed. Crawling things fled from the sun into their holes. No sound came from green hill, village or marsh.

It was a moment of drama, timed with instinctive, primitive nicety. The Hacha-tata kept his hand raised for minutes. The other priests formed a circle around Carmelita. The villagers withdrew a few yards from the magic men, squatting on their hams.

The Kolliri, toothless and wrinkled, was the first to speak.

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Kolliri: "Why are we here?"

Yatiri: "Because the moscos have come."

Laika: "Why have they come?"

Malgré-lui: "Because tribe law is broken."

Hacha-tata: "Who did this?"

The villagers in unison: "A young girl with firm breasts."

Hacha-tata: "Who is the girl?"

Villagers stood again, weaving, chanting: "There! The one in your midst."

Hacha-tata: "What is her sin?"

Villagers: "White man sin. She is the sinner with a white man."

Hacha-tata: "This surely brought the moscos."

Yatiri: "This surely brought the moscos."

Malgré-lui: "This surely brought the moscos."

Kolliri: "This surely brought the moscos."

Laika: "This surely brought the moscos."

Villagers: "So it did. So it did."

Hacha-tata: "Evil entered the girl. The moscos will not fly away unto we bring it from her."

Villagers: "It is so. It is so."

Malgré-lui: "Tribal law says we first must feast."

Villagers: "It is so. It is so."

Then Carmelita was taken to a hut by wailing parents to stay until the priests were ready to withdraw the poison.

Things were then readied for the feast. The runners had brought monkeys from the Rio Kaka. Pots were placed over slow fires in the courtyard of the village.

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We watched the women prepare the stew. Native unleavened bread is excellent with this feast. It is delicious food, and there is no prejudice against monkey stew from those who are blissfully unaware it tastes like human flesh.

It was late that afternoon when the natives licked the pots clean. Naked stomachs and those of the visiting priests bulged. Monkey tongues were served ceremoniously to the Yatiri. Brains from the cracked skulls were presented to the Hacha-tata on wooden boards—this officially ended the feast.

As evening fell, Carmelita was brought from the hut. The priests again signaled for quiet. The villagers squatted obediently on their haunches in a semicircle. The purification of Carmelita was about to begin.

Throughout the length and breadth of Indian Bolivia, Ecuador, Peru and Brazil, purification rites are much the same. Priests of the dark world invariably suck evil from the sick. When a person is ill, this can only mean that something evil has "entered" the victim. When bad times come, or a curse descends upon a man or woman or a tribe, the answer is the same. "Entering" has taken place. To cure, the "enterer" must be removed—only the priests can draw the alien objects from brain or back or leg or tongue.

In the case of Carmelita, white man was somewhere in her body. The form might be anything—a mouse of the field, a rusty spike, an ant. White man had to be sucked from the body of the girl.

Once more Donald and I had taken our positions as

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uninvited guests, Donald raging inwardly but helpless, I with a sickening apprehension over what I might witness, and yet such a curiosity as had never before obsessed me.

Flying jungle things, fuzzy and lamped, patterned the darkness with brilliant, darting chandeliers, which dwarfed the lights of the stars. Insect pyrotechnics, exploding phosphorous tracer lights, blasted dark and matted leafy places where moon and stars had never reached. These aphotic spots had never seen the sun. Dhowpow, walla-walla, talkee-talkee, almost oriental Chinese stuff, went on with the patient savage rites interminably.

Hacha-tata, Kolliri, Yatiri, all of the priests' lips still greasy and jaws specked with particles of monkey stew, mouthed the chant of magic. Finally, the monotonous droning ceased.

Carmelita, tall and sullen, stood nude and firm and brown before the judges of her sin. Shadows of the central village fire played weirdly upon her body.

This was the moment for the priests to speed their pace. The Hacha-tata raised his hand again. Carmelita's mother, chewing coca, her face strained by intolerable melancholy, came forward, carrying two smooth river stones in her hands.

"Cut the hair of the girl," the Hacha-tata commanded, "the white man sin may be in her brain. Through hair we cannot suck the sin."

Carmelita's mother used the stones as scissors. She beat them upon long tresses. The hair fell away rapidly. The anguished, goitered woman worked the stones as

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expertly as a seamstress cuts her cloth with blades of steel.

Now Carmelita looked almost boyish. Now you could believe that Aymara women had so often and so well shaved the faces of their men with river rocks that their beards forever disappeared. Only a stubble of hair was left upon Carmelita's head when her mother withdrew to join the squatting villagers.

The fraudulent Yatiri then took charge. Green juice from coca leaves, lime and ash quid ran from the corners of his mouth. In the Yatiri's face and form were mixed the melancholy of many tribes. He was part Aymara; but also the blood of the Itenez and Baures Indians, the Callaguaya humbug wanderers of tableland and jungle, fixed in his features the monotony of everlasting complaint.

Somber, shuddering, now with a frenzy of passion in his eyes fired by the desirable form of the girl, near-toxic effect of the coca leaf, and mock piety of sorcerers who suddenly believe themselves divine, he planted his mouth upon Carmelita's head. He started sucking as a leech, a human vacuum cup, for the white man who had entered her veins.

Doleful music of the quena now filled the valley with sobbing notes, mourning sounds accompanied by the measured beating of drums which throbbed bass, sepulchral, longing alarm into the unnatural realm of gloomy Indian gods.

The villagers who were not needed to play Panpipes and percussion instruments abandoned themselves first

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to the ronda dance, then soon to erratic tumbling and twitching ground-rolling, accompanied by harsh, guttural chanting which came in staccato pulses of energy. The spell of fakir and cocaine from oval green leaf fell upon them now in earnest. The orgy was on, full blast.

The Yatiri's mouth glued tighter still to Carmelita's shaven skull. His cheeks moved as a bellows. Sorcery here reached its heights and opened up the floodgates of pagan hell.

Bottles of chicha, Indian-corn alcohol, and chicha mas-cada, made from maize chewed by ancient men and women and spit from their mouths to ferment in pots, came out of village stores. Alcohol mixed with cocaine, savage rituals, hypnotic music and directions from Hacha-tata, overlord of supernatural shadow worlds, blew the top from thin native sanity.

Some of the village men grasped reeling young brown girls and dragged them into the woods. Others did not demand the privacy of bushy places.

A secondary crescendo came when the Yatiri suddenly raised his mouth and screamed: "Here! I have the sin."

He produced a long, green-stained rusty nail from between his lips. It was examined carefully.

"No, that is not the sin," his fellow fakirs finally shouted.

"No, that is not the sin," aped the villagers who still remained as audience.

Carmelita's body trembled, but she stayed fixed to the spot where the priests first had placed her. She stared

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straight ahead, eyes fixed on the dark horizon beyond the light of the village fire. There Donald and I stood, transfixed, fascinated by the rituals of our green inferno.

The orgy was far from over. The Hacha-tata, seemingly annoyed by the Yatiri's inability to suck the sin from Carmelita's head, now ordered all of the priests to take his place. The Kolliri obeyed wildly, and fixed his mouth upon the hips of the brown girl. Fellow medicine men selected other parts of her anatomy. This set the people wild. Aphrodite that night rose from the dead in her Grecian tomb, and her wraith floated over jungle land.

Carmelita's body now quivered, half in ecstasy, half in pain.

Finally, after an hour, the Kolliri fell to the ground, frothing green coca stuff with blood, squirming and writhing as though in great agony.

"Here is the sin," the Kolliri cried.

He drew from his mouth a live frog.

"This is the sin," he shouted. "It came from the body of the girl."

The other fakirs loosed their mouths, and a profound examination of the frog was conducted by his fellows.

Finally, the Hacha-tata, who had taken the frog, punched it, examined it at close range, smelled it, bit off its head, and announced: "Yes, it is the sin!"

"It is the sin!" the Malgré-lui cried.

"It is the sin! It is the sin!" screamed the priests.

"It is the sin!" the villagers chanted. "It has been found."

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Now all agreed that the miracle had been performed. The frog, surely, was the sin of the white man. And the village had been saved at last. The music was stopped. Men and girls crawled from the bushes, their delirious protests, their squeals and shrieking hushed. Drinking stopped. There was scarcely any noise in the jungle now. Carmelita limply fainted.

Before the visiting priests departed in the hours of the dawn after collecting much gold and the promised cow for their fees, the frog was nailed to a high pole in the center of the village, and the Hacha-tata, arms waving in wild circles, uttered the prophecy of the day.

"The sin is now too high for the girl to reach," he said. "She will never go to the white man again."

"Never again, never again," the villagers moaned in sing song.

Carmelita's mother carried the girl to a bed of llama's wool. The villagers fell into the stupor of sleep which orgies bring, and all was well in the valley at last.

But when Carmelita was sure that everyone was sleeping heavily under the morning skies, she lifted her bruised body and stole from the village. She made her way up the trail to Good Air Camp and to Donald's bed. Never did she return to her twisted people.

When the villagers blinked in the brighter sun of noonday, they knew where she had gone. Greatly puzzled, their faith was shaken anew, as had been that of the mother of a soft white babe on which a medicine man had worked his most wonderful magic for three days in the hot sun.

14.

Dr. Pedro

SINCE THE COMING OF THE WHITE MAN WITH HIS LAUNDRY and his magazines, the birth of a disgraceful white twin, and many strange, unorthodox sequels, the simple faith the natives once enjoyed in the iron law of untainted forbears, suffered a shock almost pitiful in its effects. Nothing had worked out according to plan. All prophecies were being confounded by strange events.

Carmelita had shattered tradition completely; the frog on the high pole had failed to work as promised by priests who personally whispered to patterns in the cumulus clouds. Carmen's mother still cried over the memory of the dead white baby. Now even Carmen went early to Good Air Camp each day and stayed late. She came home with magazine pages of the white man from every trip she made, and this could only mean that jungle law was again being more than flagrantly spurned. Frank, at last, had won his goal.

Bewildered natives with wrinkled brows, plunged deeper than ever into melancholy, and direful things were predicted by the elder men.

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But nothing happened. The moscos stayed away; mis-carriages and deaths were only normal, and all new-born calves scampered about very much alive.

Nothing made sense any more. The Hacha-tata came to plead for new purification rites, but the last was enough to hold the jittery villagers for a long time to come.

Also, for the first time, when they weighed their remaining gold left after the visits of the priests, doubt of certain types of magic was openly expressed in the valley. The rumblings were heard as far away as El Beni, and even penetrated to Los Colonias, hundreds of miles distant where Jivaro cooked curare and red spider monkeys were served on feast days.

It was a sad state of affairs. Everyone was very morbid indeed. Not only had many superstitious natives lost the crutch of faith provided for centuries by all the jungle humbugs, but the Malgré-lui and his kind were staggered by the first period of dwindling influence since the Inca conqueror Quechuas had enslaved the bellicose Aymara, and the lazy Uros of Lake Titicaca.

Nothing added up to the right total. Radical changes were taking place everywhere. The little cancer boy of Tuanuni, said a disgusted wandering Callaguaya sorcerer, had at last been taken to La Paz and the growth cut away by a German doctor, contrary to herbal law. Older villagers suddenly began to question the dignity of pain. Toothache, accepted as an honorable thing, as a matter of course, now was revealed by Carmen as something unnecessary and stupid to endure. Her white

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man who enchanted her with stories of a fairyland of lace beyond the high cordilleras, had told her so.

This sort of sacrilegious talk led to a historic chapter in the history of Bolivia—a story to music of the Pan-pipe, and plaintively told by the wind instruments of many big-lunged tribes high in the vicuña alto, as well as by the reeds of the Chiriguano.

Events were racing with the dizzy speed of an alpaca. Great changes were not just creeping into lives and minds shackled for centuries to diviners' will, but sped with an onrush as swift as flash floods from the mighty sides of Illampu. This took a precise and curious form when the natives of Tipuani's ore-rich valley, after one of Carmen's many impassioned lectures for reform, sent out a call by runners for a dentist in Sorata.

They had decided to abandon toothache, at last, as a ritual of precious despair. An altar as old as beloved Hacha-tata sorcery, fiercely defended for a thousand years, crumbled one day when half-breed "Dr." Pedro, riding a little mule, brought a small black bag of dental tools over the trail to challenge the pharmacopœia of the Callaguayas with forceps and drills.

This is the story of gold teeth in the jungle, which shook an empire of brown men and inspired sad songs for *zampona* and the *sicu*.

Dr. Pedro was a notable Jack-of-all-trades, a cunning little mestizo who had once worked three months as porter in a dentist's office in Buenos Aires. He also had been assistant to a goldsmith in Lima. Sanchez was his name then. Like most of his kind, he despised his Indian

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blood, which brought him particular, lazy arrogance, and he loved the white blood which gave him drive. His ambition was inordinate. Unmoral, crafty, vain, Dr. Pedro lived on sudden opportunities. Many times he had been fed in jails, more often by food obtained by gold fleeced from contemptible Quechua or gullible Cholo soldiers on the fringe of the Chaco.

One of Dr. Pedro's most remarkable devices was collecting presents from families of warriors who died from disease or bullets fighting neighboring Paraguay. Obtaining Chaco war casualty lists before slow Bolivian mail could advise parents of the deaths, he hurried to their homes, representing himself as a friend of brave sons who were in need in the *linea frontera*. He departed, bearing gifts or money and goods to be delivered personally to them in the Chaco. When death notices reached the families, the bereaved found solace in the thought that their loved ones' last days had been filled with pleasure by timely gifts from home.

Dr. Pedro thrived on this plan and escaped detection for months. Things got hot when one of the "casualties" turned up in La Paz on a furlough.

Dr. Pedro was exposed. He fled the capital with army police on his heels, and hid for months in the shacks of squat Uro fishermen on the Island of the Moon in Lake Titicaca, and sometimes took cover at night like a hunted thing in Inca ruins.

There he plotted a new career. He made his plans to become a dentist in Sorata, using the drills and forceps stolen in the Argentine, and the tools of the goldsmith

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filched in Peru. One day when he felt safe again, he emerged from hiding. He was rowed ashore in a reed boat, no longer Sanchez, petty confidence man of pampas and of Panama, but Dr. Pedro, American dentist. Dr. Pedro was no piker. He knew American dentists came high south of the Caribbean sea.

In the salubrious climate of Sorata, capital of the province of Larecaja, he rented a small office and ordered a ten-foot sign for the front, splashed with red and green letters proclaiming him "Dentisto Americano." The pudgy little man, dressed in his best green suit, loud silk shirt, patterned brown shoes, his black Cholo hair pasted down with perfumed oil, stood by a converted barber's chair, and waited for customers.

First to patronize him was a very efficient, birdlike female American missionary from Toledo, Ohio, a new-comer to Bolivia, there to proselyte the Aymara women from sorcery to sewing circles, and her own church's special brand of God. She had strong opinions about sewing circles, but great trouble converting anyone because her intended victims could understand not a word she said. All of the tracts she handed out were in Spanish for natives who had no written language of their own and were illiterate in all others, as well. Someone had made a dreadful slip back in Toledo.

But the indomitable Miss G. went resolutely ahead. She climbed to the high villages and fincas near Sorata and kept firing away her evangelism in English. When people asked how the natives understood her mission,

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the spinster explained, "Oh, some of it must sink in. The women seem so eager when I speak."

The native women always took Miss G.'s needles. She liked this willingness on their part and presented a tract with each. She was like a female Johnny Appleseed planting stitches in souls of the Andes.

The natives looked at one another blankly whenever Miss G. departed. Miss G. believed in attacking pagan Indian sin through the female. She felt her own sex had the power to change all things. Her personal success had proved this well.

Back home in Toledo, Miss G. was known as a zealot. She was tall, near-sighted, talkative. When she had opposition of any kind she wore it down with dogmatic weight of words. Resistance always melted. It was easier to give in to the clipped business efficiency of the spinster than to argue above her positive torrent of monologue.

Miss G. was particularly proud of herself the sunny morning when, as she walked briskly along Sorata's plaza, she saw Dr. Pedro's blatant sign. She had just returned from a large finca where she had successfully distributed eighty tracts and as many needles after a two-hour lecture to dumbfounded Aymara women.

"American dentist!" Miss G. exclaimed. "Wonderful! I'll have my teeth cleaned here and now. Think of it, an American dentist in Sorata!"

Dr. Pedro had been in business only for a few hours. Miss G., as the first customer, entered the arena of his

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newly adopted profession. The pudgy little man beamed.

"Buenas dias," he greeted Miss G.

"Oh, speak to me in English," Miss G. exclaimed. "I'm so tired of hearing heathen languages and dialects."

Miss G. rattled on. Never before had Dr. Pedro heard such a rapid fire of words in any tongue. He was duly impressed. But of Miss G.'s language he understood scarcely a word. Miss G. never stopped. She talked of needles, Toledo, tracts—a flood of things.

"I'll pull the savages out of it yet," she said finally and sat primly upright in the barber chair.

"My teeth," she pronounced. "Clean them."

Dr. Pedro's willing ear caught one familiar word. "Pull" was one of the English words he knew. The lady wanted some serious dental work. Dr. Pedro beamed.

"Si, si," said Dr. Pedro.

"Pshaw, no Spanish now," Miss G. protested almost coyly.

Dr. Pedro released the lever of the chair, so Miss G. reclined. Now Dr. Pedro was not a gentle soul by nature, and by training he had, as I have said, only three months as a porter in a dentist's office. But Dr. Pedro's enterprise was almost fanatic.

He opened Miss G.'s mouth with an enthusiastic jerk, so abruptly that the good lady sat bolt upright in her chair. Dr. Pedro, however, was prepared for this. Had he not seen patients of his employer in Buenos Aires try to escape the forceps in the same way? Had not the great dentist always restrained them?

Dr. Pedro knew a thing or two. With one hand he

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pulled Miss G. back forcibly into the chair. With the other he reached for his largest pullers. These he forced between the teeth of his patient, who now gurgled and writhed like a native doing the rondo.

But Dr. Pedro was purposeful and not to be denied. Before Miss G. could bite his fingers off, he had yanked out a wisdom tooth. Had not the dentist in Buenos Aires described these molars as most likely to offend after forty-five? Miss G. was surely that, he knew.

Dr. Pedro cast the tooth to the floor, and courageously attacked again with his forceps. By this time Miss G. was like something obsessed. She kicked, bit, yelled and squirmed so wildly that even Dr. Pedro was amazed at the spinster's strength. Whereas he had planned to extract another wisdom tooth, now with a firm grip on the lady's throat he compromised on an upper front, which responded with much greater ease.

Miss G., crazed with pain, spitting and bleeding, broke from the dentist's grasp with a remarkable maneuver that involved a complete somersault, and landed her feet away from the barber chair. Dr. Pedro was impressed with what was without doubt the most astounding feat of tumbling he had ever seen. Miss G. was now completely bereft of her senses. So accustomed was she to talking that even with her mouth full of blood she tried to speak. It was a sanguinary display, but one word emerged intelligibly. It was a piercing "Police!"

This rang through the office and into the street. Here was another word that stirred memories in Dr. Pedro. "Police" sounds enough like the Spanish "policia" to be

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understood by anyone, especially by a mestizo whose brushes with the law had given him the sharpest of ears and an instinct to sense anything pertaining to it. Dr. Pedro felt it was perhaps time to leave Sorata. It seemed distinctly probable that something had gone horribly wrong.

As Miss G. rushed foaming from his office, she almost knocked over two surprised Indian runners from the Tipuani valley who had come to fetch a dentist for their tribe.

Dr. Pedro, always an opportunist, gratefully completed hurried arrangements with them, gathered up the tools of his trade and was off on a macho, riding fast on his new errand of mercy and well over Ancohuma's cordillera trail before Miss G. could articulate sufficiently to tell her story to anyone in Sorata. When the authorities broke down the door of Dr. Pedro's late office, they found only a barber's chair and two somewhat damaged teeth upon the floor. Dentisto Americano by that time had reached soroche heights, and no one knew whither he had gone.

After her ordeal Miss G. developed a lisp, through the loss of the front tooth. It made her self-conscious, and out of pure vanity she curtailed her talking. When she spoke at all she held her lips tightly together to hide the cavity, and this was not conducive to successful evangelism. Soon she gathered up what was left of her needles and her tracts, and she was never seen again by the Aymara women of the high fincas.

Sorata people appeared to control their grief when

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she left for Toledo, and Toledo found her a changed woman. Bolivia, obviously, had done her a lot of good.

Dr. Pedro was not up to his sartorial best when he entered Tipuani. He had made the trip incredibly fast in five and a half days of headlong flight from Sorata, but his wrinkled suit still was green, his sweat-stiff shirt still silk, his mud-caked shoes still yellow-brown in spots, and his hair from which the jungle sun brought forth a dizzy aroma of perfumed oil was just thawing out from the frozen heights of Ancohuma.

The natives, half-naked in their rags, looked upon him with awe. Here, truly, was a great man from afar, one who did not smell of llama or too much of sweat, but carried with him the odor of river blossoms. Women gathered closely to breathe the scent. Some placed their noses on his hair. Men touched the padded shoulders of his coat, made Europeanwise in the Argentine. Others rubbed his shoes with leathery palms. He was a cynosure and nothing pleases a mestizo more than to have a moment in the sun.

Dr. Pedro was sufficiently important for the alcalde to welcome him in person. Natives flocked down from the hills to see him. Music of the pinguillo flute played. Sounds like those of the flageolet filled the air. The band was at the station for the hero.

Dr. Pedro was pleased. In fact, he was bursting with pride. His recent ignoring was forgotten. Here he could be king! Here was a simple respect he understood and welcomed.

15.

Altar of Hate

QUANTITIES OF CHALONA, SUN-DRIED STRIPS OF LAMB, chunos and oca and quinoa millet soup, puffed the pudgy little stomach of Dr. Pedro into the shape of a large melon. He had eaten enough to satisfy the hunger of any man, but memories of starvation as a fugitive in the altiplano were too fresh for him to forego any food in sight or prospect. Only a week previously he had lived solely on a few miserable, frost-bitten potatoes heated over a fire of llama dung on the Island of the Moon.

The hospitality of the natives who now provided a real feast placed him in a state of kaif. He called for more, and willing hands set before him earthen bowls of hot chupe, the national dish which brown men most enjoy—a half-civilized recipe calling for spiced butter, chickens killed in spite of health or age as a special concession, potatoes boiled in milk, cheese and eggs, beans and maize. Some tribes add the testicles of sheep, others the entrails of the hen; but the chupe which Dr. Pedro ate for his first meal in Tipuani was free of savage ingredients. Because the natives of this valley, after all, had climbed a rung or two of the ladder of civilization

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almost to quarter-Cholo state, and despite occasional retrogressive hankerings, gall bladders were never used in their cuisine. This was an example of progress of which the alcalde was very proud.

Dr. Pedro gorged in the big village cook-hut. He was oblivious to the hens roosting over the pots, to the lambs sleeping in the corners, to the pigs, hungry at any hour, which nosed around the fire.

But he could not keep his beady eyes away from the girl who served his food. She was Nina, eleven-year-old beauty of the valley, a gold-washer, whose hours of squatting in the river had not spread a pair of hips so lovely that Dr. Pedro burned his mouth several times as he watched her.

Dr. Pedro thought of things in the order of their immediate importance to him:

1. Gold
2. Food
3. Nina

Dr. Pedro was here to do a job. This would bring him gold. Food would be his always in the valley for the asking. Nina could wait. And in any case, connoisseur that he was in such matters, he felt that he was too full.

He went alone this night to a bed of knotty llama wool on the dirt floor of a hut erected especially for his stay. His hosts had driven poles into the ground, and roofed them over with leaves—it was Dr. Pedro's castle. Dr. Pedro slept in peace. On the morrow he would change the oral architecture of every man and woman in the valley. Dr. Pedro would treat the teeth of many

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sufferers. He would make men smile again. As he fell asleep to dream of Nina, he felt himself a benefactor of the human race. He was a happy man.

Travelers who find themselves these days on the Tipuani trail may wonder at the grinning, leering mouths of dozens of Indians, their faces like Mardi Gras masks, from Tipuani to Huanay. At first, they seem the gayest of all mankind, but if the traveler looks again he will find no mirth. The grins are fixed grins, like the grins of idiots and fools. Teeth, larger and longer than any teeth ever seen before, protrude from every imaginable angle.

The giant teeth are teeth of gold, driven over native molars by Dr. Pedro, who fashioned some of his work in such a way that the lips of his patients were pushed out and away from their gums, so many of those who turned to the dental science of the white man will never be able to close their mouths again. Dr. Pedro increased the length of some of the natives' teeth so that they have difficulty in eating or talking. Some for months could drink only thin soup anxiously strained through their new hardware, until finally they knocked the glittering teeth out of their jaws with rocks to escape the agony of starvation.

Those who have kept their gold teeth have only one fate—they will simultaneously smile and frown through the years down to their graves. Visitors to the jungle will never know which half of their faces to believe—the upper or the lower.

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Dr. Pedro prescribed gold teeth for all alike. Natives who suffered from toothache and many who did not were examined with great, individual ceremony, but each time the diagnosis was the same. A set of gold-capped teeth invariably was prescribed, and the fee equaled the amount of gold needed to decorate the savage mouth.

Dr. Pedro, being no fool, knew the natives understood primitive scales, and he could never hope successfully to cheat them, so he was lavish with the precious metal and bravely ignored the anguish of his patients. The enterprising dentist worked the soft, pure gold into cups to fashion over each tooth, and if it became necessary to pull a few to accomplish an approximate fit, as it frequently did, the mestizo used his forceps with abandon.

Spartan men of Tipuani endured the suffering in rigid silence, but some of the women screamed so loudly that jungle birds were flushed miles away, and parrots hacked protestingly in startled flight. Green and red coveys rose in such profusion that the sun was blacked out in acres of air. In such cases Dr. Pedro called upon strong village men to hold the women still. Too much gold was at stake to allow even one small mouth to escape him.

But as one misfit set of teeth after another was completed, toothache did not depart from the lives of the people. The patients grew restive and annoyed. Abscesses developed, swelling cheeks into grotesque shapes. Many could not eat; others had no appetites. A dozen or more could not make themselves understood.

Protests were abundant, but Dr. Pedro brushed these

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aside with suave and confident promises that in due course all would be well. In extreme cases he made appointments for additional examinations, and battered about with his goldsmith's hammer on aching jaws to such good purpose that few were willing to protest more.

Dr. Pedro was playing for time. His leather bags were full of gold—he was ready to depart. Only Nina remained on his list. Dr. Pedro still had unfinished business in the valley.

Late one evening he lay in wait for Nina along the trail leading to her gravel bed in the river. He felt that he had dallied long enough. This was a conquest of which he had vast confidence. This was a business he knew he knew.

Nina walked slowly, swinging her wooden gravel pan. In her other hand she carried a cloth bag filled with rich, black mud. Her day's work was over. She had made a good haul. Tonight she would cook the mud until it was as dry as powder, blow the light dust away with many careful puffs of her mouth. The heavy red stuff which remained in the hot steel pan would be gold for the family hoard buried in a hole under her mother's bed.

Nina's family had as much gold as any except the priests, who were the richest of all people of the brown nations. And of the priests, the Hacha-tata always had the most gold, as well as the most of everything else, including cows, llamas, vicuña skins, pigs, chickens and sheep. Next richest was the Yatiri, then the Kolliri, then the Malgré-lui. But even these lesser priests did well enough for themselves, and the wandering Callaguayas,

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with their herbs for patients scattered from Sorata to the Matto Grosso, Peru and Ecuador, also had no reason to complain for lack of riches of the world. The pharmacopœia of the gypsy medicine man who covers great distances prescribing juices of red roots for abortifacients, selling secret liquid, sure-fire contraceptives to young, unmarried girls, is the closest thing the South American jungle had to a drugstore.

The Callaguaya drives his ruminant llamas ahead, loaded with goods collected as fees from the ill. On their own backs the Callaguaya carries the roots and the leaves and the herbs and juices of his trade. These men, thought Nina, were all right in their way, but not heady and dramatic like the Hacha-tata. The Hacha-tata looked up to the skies with his brave head thrown back and talked to the gods. But the Callaguayas bent their backs forward and downward only to dig roots and pick up certain worms.

Nina had been working especially hard because the time was drawing near for her family to pay a large weight of gold to a Hacha-tata to make her brother a true member of the high order to which he wished to belong. The amount to be paid was more gold than they had washed out of the river for seven years, but a small price for the priest to make her brother a novice, and soon, after small additional payments, a full-fledged sorcerer who would know how to fight the poison of the snake like a shaman, or to draw fever from old bodies, as well as young, with his mouth.

For another thing, Nina was much loved by her young

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uncle who lived on the Rio Kaka, and she would be eligible to move into his hut as soon as the full fee of the Hacha-tata was paid. The thought that this day was not far off made Nina sing.

The girl stopped short when Dr. Pedro stepped from a hiding place into her path on the wooded trail, and for a second time since he had crept from the Uro's hut on the Island of the Moon, Dr. Pedro's confidence was rudely shattered. Hardly had he thrown Nina to the ground and pinioned her arms with his elbows than he began to feel an unsettling sensation in the region of his melon belly.

Nina would have welcomed a similar attack on the part of her handsome young uncle with long hair who lived on the Rio Kaka, but she obviously looked upon this sudden display of emotion by Dr. Pedro as unfortunate. She was happily prepared to cope with disorders of this nature, so she drew from a belt around her skirt a short, sharp knife, and indulging in a few feminine screams, systematically proceeded to slash the most available portions of Dr. Pedro's anatomy.

Dr. Pedro, who had at first been merely annoyed by Nina's resistance, suddenly recoiled, screaming louder than the jungle maid. He felt his own hot blood saturating his beautiful shirt, and lust left him so abruptly as to shake him with the speed of its departure. He scrambled away in panic, half crawling, half running back to the village. Nina raced home ahead of him so fast that two stupid armadillos in her path were only half rolled up upon themselves as she sped by.

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When Dr. Pedro, somewhat later, reached the edge of the village, he heard a tremendous bedlam of excited voices. He had no idea what to expect and paused to consider whether to crawl to a quiet place in the woods and be eaten by ants or face the doubtful humor of his patients. The bleeding man pondered, but not for long, for he suddenly thought of his gold. Leather bags full of it—this in jeopardy caused him greater pain than the slashes Nina had bestowed upon him. Dr. Pedro made up his mind quickly, and plunged into the village ready for anything.

Now, again, Dr. Pedro's luck held miraculously. In the village he saw Nina surrounded by a screeching populace which showed no sympathy for a girl who had so successfully defended what was generally considered her virtue. The people loudly showed they were annoyed.

"What if you have killed the doctor?" the alcalde cried. "What about our teeth? His work here has not been finished. If he is dead, most of us might as well be, too."

Hearing this, Dr. Pedro took a decided brace. He even found courage to investigate his wounds, and discovering that he had not been disemboweled, but was only the victim of superficial cuts, he walked boldly forward into the milling crowd.

When the natives saw him a cheer went up. Men and women rushed up to him almost lovingly; strong hands lifted him and carried him tenderly to his hut. Dr. Pedro was alive. Their teeth were safe. Now the people would

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not be consigned to a life of grinning like monkeys in the tall trees.

Dr. Pedro was undressed carefully, goitered nurses rubbed spider webs into his wounds to staunch the flow of blood. They brought him food. Dr. Pedro sighed and found that he still had an appetite.

And later, as he fell asleep, he was pleased to hear the sweet music of many lashes from vine whips cutting into the firm, nude flesh of Nina who had been adjudged guilty of an important sin. Her screams were not unpleasant to his ears, for Dr. Pedro also knew that Nina and her family would have to pay a fine of gold and that this, too, would sometime find its way into his leather bags.

Dr. Pedro drowsily contemplated the manifold advantages of rape.

The wounds of the good doctor healed rapidly. In a week he had been faithfully nursed to health by everyone in Tipuani, and had enjoyed his convalescence more than anything he could remember for a long time. Also he had sublimely appreciated the ministrations of Nina, forced to sit with him night and day to speed his recovery.

But when he was well again the natives clamored for the final touches which he had promised would complete the business of their teeth. Dr. Pedro promised volubly his best attentions on the following day, and that night when all in the village dreamed their troubled dreams, Dr. Pedro gathered up his heavy bags of gold, stole the

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fastest macho tethered in the pasture grounds, and Tipuani knew him no more.

The dental chair which the practitioner had left behind was a great, clumsy throne of reeds which the natives had joyously built for deliverance from pain. It had served as an altar, and survived as a symbol of anguish and hate.

In later months, the natives regarded it as a cross on which the white man had nailed them to despair. Carmen was in disgrace again. She was banished from her people, and joined Carmelita and the white men on the hill.

The Hacha-tata came again to rule a chastened people with time-honored sorcery, and his prestige, now restored, he determined never again to lose. The Hacha-tata made sure by ordering Dr. Pedro's torture chair of reeds to remain forever on exhibit as a warning to people who had strayed toward evil things.

16.

Silver Dollar, U.S.A.

AFTER I HAD LIVED THROUGH A SEEMING CENTURY OF confusion with the rattled dwellers of Tipuani, Tom and Chita returned from their "cure" in La Paz both waving health certificates aloft like citations of honor. The old man and the Chilean girl showed up over the hilly trail unexpectedly one hot day at noon time, now walking behind a single macho, in high spirits—Tom drunk, Chita prettier than ever, gayer than I had ever seen her before. Now free of bugs after a three-months' absence and down from depressing soroche heights, the incongruous couple brought a bright spirit into the Camp of Good Air which lifted the morale of everyone, including Carmelita, Carmen, Donald and Frank.

In my case, I was happier than ever before in my life because their return meant that the trip into Beni land was not far away. Also, those who together have endured the trials of cordillera agony are forever bound with a harmony almost as precious as love itself.

It was a great reunion. Chita kissed everyone and planted her lips lingeringly upon mine for so long that

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Old Tom stared at us curiously. It made you wonder what had happened during the nights along the trail.

But I learned more about this later, for that night under the discreet guidance of a new moon, we stole away to talk of many things beyond earshot of the camp. Chita, being a practical soul, carried with her an old army blanket under her arm.

The jungle morning does not dawn. Suddenly, there is a half-light; then the sun bursts forth with a great roar and teeming insect life shrills noisy hosanna, alarm clock of the wild world. Chirping of the green lush wilderness awoke me in the morning. Chita lay sleeping, covered with a warm blanket of spidery dew. When I shook her the wet embroidery fell away, and a lovely, lacy pattern of diamonds and snowflakes was destroyed, and when this gossamer stuff tumbled in a cascade of tears it might have been an omen; but I did not sense it at the moment because I was transported by such a surge of great joy.

I had found a crude and lovely half-breed princess in lonesome hours far away from home, and a misfit, faithful little companion out of a Chilean twenty-peso place brought me this moment a spiritual something finer than many men had had from better women in worlds where bawdy is a whispered word.

For the first time I noticed that morning in Chita's raven hair a dash of gold. This did not come from bleaching by the sun. Her wandering Anglo-Saxon forbear had marked her tresses to their roots, and in repose I saw Chita's face had been touched by the aristocracy of good restless white blood which built up the bridge of a Gre-

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cian nose, sensitive, full lips, and a mobility of character which might have been the curse which followed her from the Arica brothel to the shallow grave on a Tipuani knoll which I dug that week before strychnos toxifera lured me toward Ixiamas.

But before Chita died from typhus, from the bite of a louse in La Paz or Sorata or Tuanuni, she had waved a health certificate aloft signifying some sort of personal victory, and had heard a white man whisper under these heathen skies a fervent and tender old refrain which in any language or dialect one can understand without knowing the words.

"Yo te amo," Chita heard that night from the lips of one who had no Indian blood, and she felt justified by these words, and there was no way to see whether she shed an honest tear because the moon was new. Chita found life very close and death far away, and there was something new in the jungle for her that morning when she rolled up the army blanket which had been our bed and her laughter rippled out to vibrate the layers of heat waves which came down from the sky and up from the steaming earth.

She ran in tight little circles ahead like a puppy dog inviting a romp, skipped back to camp self-conscious, full of being young. All of our neighbors were up to see us come, with half-embarrassed grins pointing light, accusing fingers with their stares. Chita mischievously, naughtily shook her head from side to side, tossed her hair like a mane and laughed. But there was something in her laugh which old Tom saw or sensed, and he

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rushed to her side to hold her to keep her from falling to the ground.

Now the scandal of the night was forgotten, and no one, not even Tom, ever spoke of it because death was walking up the hill to Good Air Camp. Here we were, higher than mosquitoes can ever fly, but in South America, as everywhere else, death has long legs or strong wide wings and goes anywhere a poison louse can bite on Ancohuma or Anconcagua or a mere 500-meter hill.

Typhus acts quickly—in the jungle, or out on the world's dirty battlefields, or even in clean hospitals with white walls. Chita was splotched with exanthemas red. We took her inside to where Donald slept and rigged up my canvas cot for her bed. The typhus was like a furnace within her.

We had no doctor tools and could not fuss over Chita with a stethoscope as knowing and confident medicos always do in La Paz, but we did let hot soup drain from tablespoons down her throat, which is the treatment prescribed in the Bolivian capital; and we kept her as quiet as her delirium would permit.

The two girls stood by and kept her forehead moistened with a wet cloth, and Frank and Donald and Tom hovered around helplessly for a while until they went out to swear and damn the luck in the open air. The girls sobbed as women will. I remember all the things the others did, but can't recall my own behavior that morning while we waited for Chita to die.

The next day I dug a hole with a prospector's shovel, and Donald read self-consciously from an Episcopal

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prayer book. We had dressed her only in her sixteenth-century rose-point duchesse lace brassière, and wrapped her in our army blanket for the sentiment of the thing.

Donald got through the "ashes to ashes, dust to dust," and then remembered something from a bible class in St. Bartholomew's which surprised all of us. He put the prayer book in his pocket and, looking straight ahead to miss our eyes, he told the story of a certain woman on the Sea of Galilee about whom a mob had gathered as if to stone her, and the Son of Man chanced by and saw what was happening and said, "He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her."

We felt better after that, and we covered all the stuff in the hole with black cangili dirt and stones of the region. We drove down a stake at the head of the grave and wired to it a sealed bottle, tight and well. On the inside was a paper which identified the occupant as "Chita-14," for Chita was the only name we ever knew. Then we climbed back to the camp in silence.

Tom brought forth a gallon of chicha, and Frank found a quart of rum under his bed. And we drank it all, but none was maudlin that night and no bathos flowed from thickening tongues. There are times when alcohol will sober men, and this was one of them, and that was Chita's eulogy.

We stayed up all that night, talked about everything except the girl who had died. We slept only when the jungle gongs of nature heralded the sun. All but Tom.

"This camp's too damned close to Chita's grave," he said. And I knew then we were about ready to leave for

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the land beside the Madidi River, and push through miles of things which creep and crawl in the land of the spider monkey and the alligator where the Clune lives. No white man had ever crossed the Madidi into one of the last unexplored spots on the globe, and neither did we, since to rub shoulders with the men who woo curare from the strychnos plants, stick our noses in the gum, and find a trace of Fawcett were the things which drew us on.

We finally bade farewell to our neighbors in Good Air Camp and were soon well down the trail for a last, almost forgotten errand at Chita's grave. We had found her health certificate. Tom insisted it be placed in the bottle with the paper bearing her name.

"She was as proud of this," he said, "as of her lace brassière."

"I'll keep her buck to remember her by," I said.

"You earned it," Tom replied fervently. "But," he added, "it's a counterfeit, half lead, and phony as hell. I knew it all the time, but I never had the heart to tell her."

17.

Into the Beni Land

WE PACKED OUR "HOUSES" AND SUPPLIES UPON THE BACK of a single macho. A good jungle house consists of a folding army cot, a rubber poncho, six feet long, four wide, an army blanket or its equivalent, and a mosquito net.

When set up on level ground the cot, for best results, is flanked head and foot by four poles five feet long driven into the ground. These hold the mosquito net aloft and also support the poncho spread the length of the cot. When net and blanket are carefully tucked in, a jungle traveler will find this a tight, snug home for the night. The single army blanket will keep him warm enough. The net will turn waves of mosquitoes and the poncho will safely shed the rain and dew. Whines of angry, frustrated wings assailing the cotton walls is pleasant music blending harmoniously with the orisons of unseen burnished aborigines chanting mysteriously to the heights.

This is not "How to Pitch a Tent in the Wilderness," but a paragraph of advice about your tent if you head for Bolivia. Leave it home. Carefully prepared expedi-

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tions, with rich and heavy equipment, are likely to break down by the sheer force of their own weight. "Travel light, travel fast" is the moral of every jungle yarn you hear from the heights of the Cordilleras to the waving nut grass plains of Beni.

We carried other equipment, but as little as possible, consisting of two thin frying pans, two pots for making coffee and tea or boiling native cereals, or cooking up a chupe. This was all, except a change of shirts, underwear, extra boots, and medicines—a load light enough even for a llama to carry, or to portage with ease past rapids too rough for a canoe or raft.

Tom and I headed into the Beni land with fewer supplies than a family would take on a picnic to the park, but unless we could live on the land we would not live at all. A hundred mules could not carry sufficient food to fill two hungry bellies three times a day for the time required to make the long round trip. We were safe because we had what it takes to live in the jungle—not money or beads or silver or gold, but arsenic and pills, vaccine, lye and a full quart of the cheapest Hoyt perfume. These were the items we carried for trade, things dearer than all of the Inca's treasure—medicine to sell the ill, and perfume for vain, savage brown girls to douse on their greasy hair.

At last we headed out of the crease of the Parker House roll, where Tipuani lies. Our farewells were undramatic. This was principally because there is a definite code which demands outward indifference of those who live in the jungle. But inwardly, things sometimes seethe

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out there which self-conscious, excited man must never show. This is a country where shudders or gooseflesh are embarrassing and display is bad taste.

Sticky, resinous, black curare, which has paralyzed the motor nerves of a million monkeys and untold thousands of men—the stuff which may have killed Fawcett if he is dead, the mysterious alkaloid of life and death; thoughts of being on the threshold of the detective story's most convenient poison, head hunters' big magic; and a hope of modern science to cure the incurable—these things made one's heart race madly. But that morning as we quick-timed over the hills to Huanay to follow the macho's pace, these emotions old Tom would never know, and any he may have had were as inscrutable as the expression on a Clune Indian's face.

Behind, Ancohuma loomed into thrilling heights. Back there up on her hills ten days away, electric vicuña fur crackled and snapped in the static land, whether the animal touched an overhanging crag in life, or dead fur found resurrection under the hand of an Indian maid. I thought of curare vegetable poison which lay ahead, and animal cat static of the heights behind, and how one does not have to rub vicuña fur the wrong way to make the sparks fly. And how the same skin at sea level will lose its fire, tamed by alien lowland. Indians of the heights will tell you that a vicuña never dies when its skin is kept at home in the high country where it is born, and that the fleet and fast-disappearing animal's soul lives in its fur and departs only when dropped out of its element down to the sea.

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Thoughts like these helped drive away twinges of sorrow over Chita, and the normal sadness of leaving our old friends on the hill of Good Air Camp. There was even a little warm emotion involving our departure from the goitered people of the village itself.

But all of this was somewhat mercifully assuaged in the earnest business of pushing ahead into the Beni land and by routine attention to important things close by. The sturdy little macho kicked up a cloud of dust six feet ahead of our noses on the narrow trail.

Was the macho's pack cinched tight? Would the padding slip and cut its back to the raw, and plunge precious equipment a thousand perpendicular feet into a gorge? Were the macho's unshod hoofs thick enough for the miles which lay beyond?

These were damned important things out there. You could think of your macho as water in the desert; a canteen of life; a dramatic, metaphorical straw. You can't pour it on too thick.

Why, then, with these serious considerations of the thin armor between life and death—veritably a jackass' hide—would a jungle wanderer think of vicuña skins dyed ugly blues and greens, spread on a Mason & Hamlin piano in Manhattan pent houses, or warming the feet of a blonde show girl in a Madison Avenue hide-away, and hate the people who encouraged the Aymara hunter to kill the fleet and timid meteor of the Cordilleras and damn its soul.

Before the Germans brought to Bolivia their bright and ugly dyes, vicuña skins were always stained with

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delicate, pastel shades, and you wondered why the hell people had never been content to leave well enough alone.

A fierce surge of angry fondness for all old customs and for all things is likely to possess you during these thoughtful moments on a jungle trail. You plan a great crusade when your trip is over to free the world of all smug interlopers who invade the privacy of man or beast. You'll snatch the gun from a hunter's hands, and keep the missionary at home where he belongs.

Get up on your soap box and shout! Who are you to label "quack" the Callaguaya who pours urine down a sick man's throat? Your crusade will change contempt to respect for all man's cherished ideas, whether they be right or wrong—until you suddenly know that these efforts would make you the greatest meddler of all. So call off your crusade and get along to the Beni! Vast distances intervene. Drop your philosophy. The jungle is no place for it.

And, anyway, women drink urine in civilization, only doctors there call it by a fancy and expensive name. Long before medical science found pharmaceutical merit in the urine of pregnant women, Indian medicine men prescribed it for ailing people in the green wilderness and it served its purpose just as well. Benvenuto Cellini consumed it in prison, and lots of it, and lived.

The medicine men of South America coined a phrase long before Greek physicians ever heard of the Hippocratic Oath, which the best specialists know has pro-

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sweetish stuff, mixed with wild honey and almonds. The poisonous impact on my stomach produced a miracle cure in seconds, but whether it was the urine, or the almonds or the leaves which did the trick I'll never know, and all of this is not passed on as profound advice to substitute urine for bicarbonate of soda, because I learned on the following day that the Callaguaya's concoction which had saved my life the night before contained also, among other things, diced particles of a notched, six-inch tongue of the resplendent toucan. That confused everything, because one never knows which element of a dozen varieties of ingredients effects the actual cure.

I remember that the Callaguaya medicine man had stood above me the night before and suddenly spurted a flow of his queer dialect cure talk. This might even have been the magic which cured my pains. The Callaguaya wished to glue his mouth upon my stomach and speed the recovery by sucking the poison from my body, but there I rebelled. Seven million New Yorkers who ride the subways know by heart from looming posters in every station a horned red devil who points his spear toward a slogan—copyrighted by French Lick Springs. The stuff I drank had all the strength of this and a surprising plus.

Fawcett preferred the contents of his Eno bottle to the Callaguaya's prescriptions but he had tremendous respect, Tom told me many times, for these amazing men. This was borne out by the fact that he rarely made a long jungle trip without contracting with one of them to accompany his party. There was a touch of hypo-

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chondria in the man. He was a combination of many things, but the phobia medicine chest held him almost as slavishly as did his day dreams of Eden. In twilight hours when he made his camp in the jungle and drank scorching tea, he would watch with strange fascination his Callaguaya employee steep a mysterious herbal remedy for a sick guide or an ailing arriero.

Fawcett himself often experimented with some of the simples. He quaffed the valerian, or sipped the jalap, because jalap was a hydragog and he was no longer a young man and sometimes required what he termed "a jiggling of my bladder." But these medicines he took only haphazardly, always returning to the Eno bottle to which he had been firmly addicted for decades. To this habit he attributed his robust health and his eager mind.

18.

The “Walking Drug Stores”

THE CALLAGUAYAS, ORIGINATING IN THE PROVINCE OF Munecas, have contributed to the world's pharmacopœia many important drugs. Four centuries ago, when the Spaniards first introduced syphilis into the Western Hemisphere, the Callaguaya medicine men went snooping into the forests of Upper Peru, Bolivia and Brazil and made a valuable discovery for themselves and the infected people of the big continent who were to become their guinea pigs. One of the simples first unearthed was the milk of the mumure tree. This served as a very fair stop-gap until Dr. Erlich came along 400 years or so later with his famous magic bullet (and later physicians with the now sensationally publicized five-day “drip” treatment).

Whether the mumure milk ever effected a real cure or not now seems unimportant in the light of modern discoveries, but to hear the Indians praise it is to be sure that the psychological benefits received by the sufferers were enormous.

THE "WALKING DRUG STORES"

The Callaguayas claim to have discovered many years ago a "sure-fire" cure for insanity, an analeptic they concocted from the marapuama bush. This was guaranteed to be even more efficacious in quieting the ravings of mad men than toucan-feather rituals or even the sucking treatment of the Hacha-tata.

But whether or not claims for such remedies are only the mouthings of fakirs, it remains a fact that modern scientists have turned from sacrosanct citadels to other discoveries of the Callaguayas and have applied them sensationally in the practice of civilized medicine all over the world. While the medicine men of Munecas were distilling an emetic from the tiny heart-shaped douradinha plant, these "walking drug stores" were also prescribing the juices of the ipecacuanha plant, which many an inebriate knows by the name of ipecac, a bottled substitute for a finger down the throat. It is also used for teetotalers who seek immediate relief after eating too much rich food. Its efficacy has no limit. Its properties as a cathartic were known to the Callaguayas centuries ago when they sought to learn for the first time the mysteries of the pretty creeping plant. They boiled down the stringy roots and looked for a sick Indian to test it on.

Callaguaya lore you hear on the trail says that the first Indian to take the medicine responded amazingly and it was sometime before the red M.D. could determine whether the double action evinced in this particular case would always repeat itself. The result of the first experiment was so widely publicized that it was weeks before

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another patient could be prevailed upon to consume a dose, this time administered in a smaller quantity. When the new guinea pig merely regurgitated, the Callaguayas knew they had a wonderful discovery, indeed. And so the Indians who had been alarmed by the contortions of the first man in the Western Hemisphere to take ipecac, now rushed to get the prescription from the Callaguayas who by this time had worked out the dosages properly to fit any contingency that might arise. It was even found to relieve indigestion. Later customers who scrambled for ipecac were much like the people of the seventeenth century who readily ate the tomato after some brave soul risked his very life to taste it when it was considered the deadly "love apple" by one and all.

Musa, a very important Callaguaya priest, talked with me for many hours of the history of his famous tribe of "quacks." But that is hardly a proper term for men who may have discovered, and certainly used jalap made from a dried root, a marvelous hydragog causing plentiful watery evacuations. Musa came to Tom's rescue with a spoonful of jalap after the little man found, under the strain of the march, that he could not in any way duplicate the feats of prowess which had made him famous with the trough in his La Paz stable.

To say that Tom's reaction to the drug was instantaneous and most amazing is to put mildly a phenomenal performance, both physical and acrobatic. After this experience Tom bought a bottle and carried it with him always, but in the future carefully reduced the dosage. To watch him warily pouring small drops of jalap when-

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ever the need was indicated, squinting and wrinkling his brow, testified to the tremendous respect he had for the drug. After this Tom raved tediously over the virtue of Indian medicine.

But he was not the only one. Over every rough and rocky part of the trail where the red man lives most of them proclaimed unhesitatingly that the Callaguaya has been the savior of his life more than once. These testimonials came from the heart and the soul. They were not always inspired by superstition, or anything approaching it. As a matter of fact, when the Callaguaya knuckled down to his own business and stayed away from savage rituals with the Kolliri, he was as convincing as the best North American physician with the most soothing bedside manner imaginable. The Callaguaya was making quinine from cinchona barks when witch burning was still being practiced in New England, and was curing malaria and tarbadillo fevers before any of the early settlers even knew what lay west of the Connecticut River.

Many a Bolivian will tell you that the Callaguaya first developed sarsaparilla as a medicine and a tonic beverage from the smilax plants, that he used the roborant valerian and gave it a name in his own dialect long before Europeans honored it with the name of a Roman emperor. This he made from a perennial herb with small white or pink flowers, and some of the credit must be given him also for the development of tolu, which was Callaguaya-prescribed in the jungle as a healing balsam when he learned by trial and error that it could be obtained from an evergreen.

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Another tonic ascribed to the ingenuity of the Callaguaya is quassia, made from the wood of a bitter ash and said to be as efficacious for run-down female bodies as anything a physician can prescribe for that tired feeling.

Nearly every Indian in South America knows that the Callaguaya used the dried leaves of the foxglove as a heart tonic before the time of Pizarro, the ex-swineherd of Estramadura in Spain; and red men's legend says the Callaguaya treated him with an extract made from that plant, and were unfortunately responsible for prolonging his life. Botanists called the spirit of foxglove digitalis, a name they got from the Latin word *digitus*, which means finger. The leaves of the foxglove might resemble a digit, at that, for the more imaginative.

Go on down the list of the pharmacopœia attributed to the Indian medicine man and you can find aconite, which the Callaguaya made from the beautiful plant he found in Bolivia. Americans call it monkshood or wolfsbane. Aconite can be a powerful poison when distilled from some species of the plant, and a wonderful blessing when administered properly. The Callaguaya knows how to prescribe it with great nicety, just like your family physician.

Modern medicine has learned many of the secrets of the Callaguaya, who knew the deadly nightshade, or belladonna, long, long ago; and cocaine, camphor, arnica, paracoto, a dried bark medicine, condurango bark and matico leaves. He was one of the world's first physicians who knew the advantage of making medicine "taste good" and with bitter herbal extracts mixed sweet

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and pungent caryophyllus, U.S.P., to the laymen nothing more nor less than the common clove. He varied the "sugar-coating" with pimenta, or allspice. But one secret the Callaguaya knows best of all has never been imparted to any white man—the jealously guarded prescription for his "perfect" abortifacient.

"It's funny to me that you're out here looking for Fawcett and gold," Tom told me one day, "when you should be trying to find that formula. If you could take it back to the United States, you'd be a millionaire overnight." I obtained a sample all right, and might have traded it for a fortune north of the Caribbean Sea, but instead I swapped it for a heart under the twinkling Southern Cross.

It cost me untold riches, no doubt, but it won me love. It's the sort of a bargain you never, somehow, seem to regret. But that has to do with pretty Illiacia, a Mosotene belle, and a problem of gynecology in the jungle which curiously blazoned anew the Fawcett trail, among a tribe of people who live in a world as strange as the eleven-foot-long earthworms who irrigate the land upon which they dwell, laying eggs like those of pigeons for the aborigines to eat as delicacies.

But all I ever learned about it was it was green and gooey and that if used as freely in the U.S.A. as by the happy, unworried jungle maidens, there wouldn't be much use any more for Margaret Sanger.

Musa, wise old Musa, wore the garb which has distinguished his kind for centuries—tribal raiment of long trousers made of blue cloth which were decorated with

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fringed cuffs, a gray, woolen shirt and a long, narrow poncho. Covering his head was a wide straw hat. This costume was the only shingle the Callaguaya had. In this he could be seen from afar, and the cries of "Callaguaya" sounding from throats of joyous lookouts sent word to the bed-ridden that relief was on the way.

Musa was a llamero, not a mule man. But he always started out from Chuma with only a few bags of herbs, followed by three or four lesser associates. When he returned two or three years later he and his men drove ahead of them a hundred llamas laden with merchandise of many nations, clothes and skins of northern Bolivia and Peru, feathers and teeth from the Amazon of Brazil, newly discovered aphrodisiacs from steaming jungle glades and perhaps a new herbal physic, located in a plant which grows on the snowy side of a Chilean volcano. Musa left Chumo a relatively poor man. He returned rich—walking, because he is not a rider. His cargo is too precious, any of it, to be left behind. So Musa walks. Some of his llamas might carry a considerable haul of anil, which we know as indigo, and others a thousand varieties of botanical jewels. There would also necessarily be a large supply of cassia physic made from the product of the cinnamon tree, or from a bean.

During his three-year journey, Musa and his men had traveled through country with climate so rigorous that llamas do not procreate, hens cannot hatch, and children cannot be born. During confinement the expectant mother must seek more kindly temperatures or her babe will be stillborn. He has plunged through fields of ever-

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lasting summer. The forbidding grandeur of the crests and the steaming greenery where the anaconda slithes, he takes in imperturbable stride.

He will train a midwife to shake an expectant mother and twirl her in circles until she is dizzy, or he will anoint a leper. It's all the same to the Callaguaya. He is half good, half bad. At once counterpart of the great M.D. and the cure-all medicine show which exhibits bottles of tapeworms and the black-faced comedians with banjos in front of rural Georgia courthouses Saturday afternoons when the farmers come to town.

He'll join voodoo rituals or prescribe his green and gooey abortifacient to any maiden with a worried, wrinkled brow. Many of the girls plan their sins in the jungle so that the results will conveniently coincide with scheduled arrivals of the Callaguayas and his emerald bullet. Heaven help the jungle wench who notches her calendar stick incorrectly.

The Emerald Bullet

THE EMERALD BULLET HAS KNOWN MANY OTHER NAMES, such as "Tonic of License" and also "The Great Temptation." But the latter sprang not from the possibility that it lured or lulled the jungle virgin into sin with pleasure and no penalty, but because murder, torture, bribery, cajolery, deceit and every chicanery known to the human race have been employed by white men to wrest the secret of its powers from the Callaguaya.

Fawcett tried honestly enough to buy a sample from his mercenary Callaguayas for a chemical analysis on his return to London, and Tom had many times dangled heavy bags of gold before those he met on the trail. Both had failed. The biggest "gold mine" undiscovered by white man in South America still was a safe secret of the humbug medicine men after both of these astute travelers' best efforts.

Chemists, amateur and professional, from Cuzco and Lima, La Paz and the pampas, Quito and Cali have wooed the wandering herbalists, flattered them, tempted them, threatened them, but never learned the secret of the miracle. Callaguayas still speak darkly of a syndicate of

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Spanish adventurers from Peru who coldly slew two of their forbears a hundred years ago on a trail near Lake Siegria when these brave guardians of the formula disdained their golden offers and died as martyrs after angering the bandits by drinking their last two bottles of the green goo to keep it from falling into their hands. The Callaguayas' bodies were found a year later when another long pilgrimage of herbalists set out from Munecas and followed their llamas over the same age-old trail.

Another Callaguaya, who refused to yield a sample of the juice to a white man near the Bolivian village of Inglis Inglis in 1896 is alleged to have been burned to death by a slow fire, dying even as his torturer offered freedom, life and riches for a list of the wondrous ingredients. But where all of the gold of many men, the careful plotting of criminals and killers, murder and torture had failed, where Fawcett argued unavailingly and Tom sought to bribe without results of any kind, a bottle of the precious stuff fell into my hands hardly without effort, the combination of a bellyache and the love of an ancient Callaguaya priest for the ailing son of his twilight years.

When eighty-nine-year-old Musa poured the urine down my throat, he had a problem of his own back home in Munecas, one much closer to his heart and his soul even than the green heritage of his tribe.

Old Tom stood by my cot as the wrinkled Indian administered the bitter dose. Musa did a lot of talking which I could not understand. Tom jabbered faithfully back at him. I was too sick at first to strain for a word

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or two of the dialect I had learned in the wilderness. But later, when Musa's powerful concoction had done its work, I took considerable interest in the sad old philosopher who sat on a stone near my bed and stared at me hours on end.

"You look like his sick son," Tom said. "He can't get over the resemblance, even if you are white and his kid's bronze. He says the features are identical, your nose bridge and the way you have that sad faraway look in your eyes sometimes."

"Go to hell," I said to Tom.

"I told him you'd had some schooling back in the States," Tom said, ignoring my invitation, "and he's interested."

"I don't get it," I said.

"It's just that old Musa thinks anyone who went to a big white man's school must know a lot about medicine, see? And his son's dying."

"But *he's* the big medicine man. I only studied Latin. Why doesn't he cure his own son?"

"He's tried all the old remedies," Tom said; "valerian, and ipecac and tolu and jalap and witchcraft and the sucking of the Kolliri. His son just won't get well, I tell you. He's hurrying home to him now. He's been pushing fast ever since he heard he was taking a turn for the worse."

This seemed strange to me, and I told Tom so. How, by Manco Capac, Son of the Sun God, could old Musa have "heard" of the sudden serious setback of his ailing son hundreds of kilometers away in Munecas. No one

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had passed old Musa traveling in either direction. We knew that.

"No one passed us," I said. "There's only one way in here and one way out and so no one passed him. How did he *hear* his son relapsed?"

Tom looked disgusted.

"You ask too damned many questions," he said acidly. "I've been living in the jungle as many years as you are old, and there are a lot of things I don't question out here. There's stuff you just believe, take for granted. When you've seen as much of these people as I have you'll know what I mean."

"Meaning mental telepathy or radio, I suppose. Or tom-toms, maybe? But we haven't heard any drumming since we left Tipuani."

"Neither," said Tom. "I mean old Musa got his message from homing flies, the fastest thing in the world—man, beast, sound, insect, mechanical anything—the fastest thing on earth, a fly, a homing fly, a deer botfly. That's how old Musa heard about his son's bad turn. A fly told him."

"Did a little bird tell you that?" I asked sarcastically.

"I'm not kidding," Tom protested indignantly. "And I've got proof, too. Those flies have been clocked at 820 miles an hour."

"That's twice the cruising speed of the fastest modern plane," I said, "but, anyway, it's too damned fantastic, even if a fly *can* travel at that speed. How would a fly bring a message to a man?"

"These Indians have a code," Tom said, "or codes.

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They are painted on the flies' wings. Each color, green, yellow or brown, has a different meaning in different patterns. It's a whole language in itself."

It was the city editor sending the cub reporter to the composing room for a type rule.

"Nonsense," I said.

"Well, some day maybe you won't say that," Tom prophesied, half sadly. "Just wait until you've been out here long enough."

The old man seemed hurt, and I hurried to change the subject. Anyway, it was a good story. Homing flies! At least that was something new. But so would be the discovery of a unicorn, or a live dinosaur or a hippogrif. But I didn't rub it in.

Instead I asked about old Musa's son. "What's his trouble?" I said.

All this time the aged Callaguaya sat on the stone looking at me morosely. Tom again acted as interpreter. The strange babbling which went on sounded like clipped Hindustani.

Old Musa spoke excitedly for some minutes. He pointed to the sky, to his heart and to the earth. He sprang to his feet, made circles in the air with his forefingers, then resumed his seat, letting his torso lean limply forward.

"He says his son has thin blood," Tom announced finally.

"That's anemia," I said.

"What's good for that?" Tom asked. "Old Musa wants to know."

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Musa spoke up again in his choppy dialect. He babbled wildly.

"He wants to know what you said," Tom interpreted. "He said he'd give anything he has to find a cure for his boy."

"Anything?"

Tom jabbered at old Musa again.

"Yep," said Tom, "he says *anything*."

"Tom," I half whispered, "does that mean the emerald bullet, too?"

The old prospector turned to verdigris under his sun-coppered wrinkles. His hand shook as he wiped it across his mouth. Perspiration broke out in the canals of his seamed forehead. He was speechless for seconds. Here were great stakes. Their importance would have staggered any man.

Easy, Tom, easy!

"I know what's good for anemia, Tom," I said, now thoroughly excited myself. I whispered to old Tom:

"Ask him," I commanded, "if he would give the E-M-E-R-A-L-D B-U-L-L-E-T for the cure of anemia?"

Why I spelled those words out to Old Tom that night in Huanay, Bolivia, where the Rios Kaka and Tipuani meet to join the great Beni, is a strange thing, since old Musa spoke only his dialect and had never before heard an English word. It was like Fawcett's confidential whisper to Tom Donovan on the Matto Grosso trail where not another man was nearer than a hundred kilometers away. It's a nurse or a mother spelling out things they

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don't want baby to understand, although baby can't even talk. It's not candy, it's C-A-N-D-Y, just to be sure. A baby's an old soul, after all, and so is Musa. They might know anything.

This was big medicine and great suspense.

"I've got Fowler's Solution of Arsenic in my medicine bag," I said to Tom, "and calves' liver is good for anemia, too. Swap this dope and we'll split."

"We'll be partners in it?" Tom asked, getting a little better control of himself.

"Nothing less!"

Tom put the proposition up to Musa. They screamed at each other for half an hour, Tom now in full stride, bargaining cruelly. Offering a dollar's worth of patent medicine and prescribing a diet of calves' livers for a secret worth all of the tin of Patino! But Tom didn't reveal his prescription then. He only promised old Musa a cure for his boy. Musa declined apoplectically. He shook his head and stamped his feet.

"Anything else," he said, "but that."

"We want nothing else you have," Tom shouted. "It's the emerald bullet, or nothing."

Still Musa refused. Tom ranted.

"Tell him," I suggested, "we don't want the secret. We just want a sample."

Tom obeyed as directed.

"We don't want to know the ingredients," Tom said; "all we want is just a little, a tiny bit in a bottle. How can we learn the secret from a little sample?" And this was the question which turned the trick. Musa was half-

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convinced that his precious formula would still be safe with just a few cc's in our hands.

And so it was—a bottle of an arsenic solution and the recommendation of a liver diet for a specimen of green juice worth untold treasure back in the civilized world. I got up from my cot, weakly, and took out the medicine from my treasured jungle sack.

Old Musa produced the bottle of his fabulous sample with the most pathetic, melancholy air. I handed him my tonic and he passed over the bottle of his heritage. The impeccable majesty of the aged man was astonishing. Tom waited until the sample was in my hands before he gave the directions for the liver diet.

Perhaps Musa had sold his birthright for a mess of pottage, but maybe he had saved the life of his son.

He was depressed, and suddenly seemed a hundred years old, bent and more wrinkled than when he brought me from the brink of death with his nauseous oil. I felt like a cheat, and I was glad to see him pack his llamas quickly and hurry away to the far distant bedside of his ailing son.

Tom and I politely saw him off. There are even some amenities among thieves who are so low they would trick a senile old Callaguaya. I soothed my conscience a little with the knowledge that arsenic is a good blood tonic and calves' liver is prescribed for anemia. But it was pretty thin going, nevertheless.

As the old man pulled out of Huanay, with Tom and I standing there watching, self-consciously and ready to wave a weak farewell, a brown blur traveling with in-

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credible velocity shot past my line of vision with the speed and roar of a dozen dive bombers. The spot circled again and again, and then lighted on Musa's hands.

"That's a deer botfly," Tom said. "It's a bulletin from a sick bed in Munecas."

"Don't be silly, Tom," I protested, "that's just a fly, that's all."

"Don't you believe it," Tom answered ruminatingly, half to himself. Old Musa seemed more excited than usual. He stared at the fly for long seconds and then clucked imperatively for his llamas to make speed, and the train soon disappeared in a cloud of dust faster than any of its kind ever seen before going up hill or down.

And at that moment I wouldn't have been surprised to see a Sianthropous Man come walking out of the jungle leading a four-legged half-fish creature out of the Carboniferous Age, or the ghost of a monkey hanging by its tail in a sapodilla tree playing an accordion.

"It's as fantastic, Tom," I declared, "as an astraspis, man's 370,000,000-year-old vertebrate ancestor, being caught by a fish hook in a Rockdale County, Georgia, creek."

"Speak English," advised Tom. "We've got the emerald bullet, haven't we? And ain't we rich?"

"I guess so," I said, "but that's entirely immaterial."

"Riches immaterial?" Tom asked incredulously.

"But conscience?" I asked. "Did you see the sorrow on Musa's face?"

"Conscience," answered old Tom, "is mostly economic. There's no Golden Rule in the jungle."

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That quieted me a while, and I pondered a moment or two between the quick snatches of wild drama and forgot the fishes which swam out of the slime to make us men. Or are we? And there in the jungle you'll try to get down to the jungle earth, too, under pressing circumstances, and conveniently skip the thoughts of theorists like Darwin and Haeckel and Huxley and Gregory and the Golden Rule. You're evolving yourself, close to primitive things, even as did the reptile and the ancestral lemuroid. You are so close to raw stuff now that it's a test of sorts, and you feel a sensation of relief that you *did*, that you *do*, feel a sense of pity for your fraudulent treatment of Musa. What a hell of a tough bargain we drove!

Maybe you aren't a savage, at heart. The very fact that you have a conscience shows that you are civilized. Damn it! There is a Golden Rule—anywhere!

Hypocrite? Well, in your inside jacket pocket you hold the bottle of green juice which makes jungle maidens smile, which wipes away their frowns. It's a gold mine! You can buy the Hurt Building in Atlanta, or bid for Radio City in New York.

Hypocrite! You're damned glad you've got it, and you know it in your heart, and don't deny it. But what a hell of a tough bargain!

I mouthed all of these things to Tom.

"I guess you're civilized," he philosophized. "That ancestor of yours and mine never had a conscience. I guess conscience is the only thing which makes you civilized."

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And then as an afterthought he asked: "By the way, is calves' liver really any good for what ails Musa's son? Last time I was in the States they were feeding it to cats."

"Not now, Tom. It's a fancy, expensive dish. They're serving it, even, at Larue's in New York. Dietitians say it has wonderful vitamins."

"Larue's?" asked Tom. "Vitamins?"

"Yes, and Pierre's Roof and the Ritz. The Lafayette and Barney Gallant sell it for \$2.50 a throw. Its extract is being bottled and sold in drugstores."

Tom chewed the end of a cigarette ruminantly.

"How much does it cost at Thompson's?" he asked.

"About thirty-five cents," I said. "You know calves' liver now wears a top hat."

"Then to hell with it," said Tom. "I'll get my liver at Thompson's, or else eat cat."

The Deeper Wilds

IN THE MORNING WE HEADED FOR THE DEEPER WILDS. Early jungle lights curled timorously from the promising horizon. Titian and Maxfield Parrish were painting the dawn. A giant ant-eater (*myrmecophaga*) seven feet long, with a snout like a stegosaurus threw its prehistoric-looking body out of our path in crazy alarm. Sleepy parrots screeched a lazy hail to the new day, and then suddenly surprised by the echo of their own shrills, were startled into earnestness of action. Green and red wings whirred in hundreds of fanning pairs, and a resplendent toucan flew out of a bower of orchids which had framed the bird a moment before with their challenging brilliance.

Anything like this could last but a second, a toucan with wild-orchid backdrop. When the bird flew away a Michelangelo masterpiece melted before the eyes and the oils oozed into sloppy puddles beneath the frame, the Louvre burned down and the angels in the dome of St. Peter's soared out of the pattern. The evanescence of the jungle masterpiece brought something home, and too damned fast!

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But get along, little mule! *Andale, macho!* You were now really on your way. You were heading into the authority of the jungle, where there wasn't any fooling. Get along, little mule! *Andale, macho! Macho mio*, grunt under your load and kick up the dust. You are a long way from home, little mule. Too bad you can't see the toucan try to dazzle the parasites. But you understand grass, little mule, and you'll have your belly full soon.

You like this little mule a hell of a lot. You'll feed him well when you scorch your throat with tea at noon, when the sun throws the book at everything at twelve o'clock from the equator to the north. You'd like to hug this little mule, or kiss this little mule. Kiss a mule? Why, hell, yes! If it would make this little mule know how much you loved him you'd kiss him, any time, in the lobby of the Hamburgo in La Paz or in Macy's proverbial window in Herald Square.

This little mule's your friend, see? Wrap a few thousand miles of jungle around your lonesome soul, then you can understand when you'd kiss a mule, or hunt for him the tenderest grass and roots at the foot of precipices while he waits for you on the trail, or pat his rump, or damned near cry over the raw spot rubbing now his back.

Yes, you'd kiss a mule if it would help the mule, but instead you put creosote on his sore, and lighten his load to allow his hoofs to get over that tender feeling you've been noticing lately with some concern. You don't mind slowing down the pace for your little mule and lugging

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some of the supplies, packback, yourself. Faithful little mule! *De lo lindo!*

You'll check Tom later on his deerbot fly and find that he's right about its speed, and that the male (*Cephenomyia pratti* hunter) can travel 818 miles an hour without half trying, and that the female has been clocked at 614.

But the business of the painted wings of the stub-nosed "bullet"—you can't swallow that. Yet why did old Musa look so long at the fly which landed on his hand in the morning at Huanay?

"And say, Tom, another thing: how old is Musa's son?"

"About seven now, I guess," he answered.

"Well, that means that Musa became a papa at eighty-two. Pretty old for that sort of thing, isn't it?"

"It would be, ordinarily," Tom answered, "but Musa could have had a swig or two of oppi, you know."

"Oppi?"

"That's the great aphrodisiac of this wild land," Tom explained. "That's another formula you should take back to the United States."

"I don't need any," I said.

"I do," Tom muttered enviously, "and we're heading for the place where there's plenty of it. Ixiamas is the home of oppi. No man dreads old age in Ixiamas. It works both ways. The women there are happy, too."

"Stop pulling my leg, Tom. I'm looking for Fawcett."

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"I remember once when Fawcett looked for oppi. And found it, too!" Tom said. "Trouble with you is you're too skeptical."

You recalled the brown blur zooming past your line of vision and the fast deerfly alighting on old Musa's hand. Maybe Tom was right about everything. Well, you'd soon see.

The Abundant Paradise

THE TRAIL OVER WHICH TOM AND I MADE OUR WAY INTO the practically unknown interior of Bolivia is as historic to South America as is the route of Paul Revere's famous ride to New England. Every inch of it teems with legend and history, every speck of its gravel and dust has been stained with the blood of warriors, red and white, down through the centuries.

Carcillaso de la Vega, famous descendant of the Incas, said, once upon a time, that the Peruvian government, long before the Spanish conquest, peered greedily at the country east of the Andes.

The longer the leaders looked the more curious they became. After a while they decided to do something about it, and sent the Inca "big man," Prince Yuhuar Huaccac, with 25,000 men and many generals, to explore and conquer that geography east of Cuzco. Rocca, father of Yuhuar, himself gave explicit directions to his son.

"Go into the land of Antisuyo," he said, "wipe out the Antis Indians or enslave them."

Prince Yuhuar marched fast ahead of his troops. Before

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long he sent runners back to Cuzco announcing that he had annexed more than ninety miles to the dominions over which his father ruled. The Inca capital was jubilant over his victories. But not for long.

The next messenger took word to Rocca that an enemy more powerful than the Indians, the terrible terrain of the Andes, had won a partial victory for the Antis. Prince Yuhuar was forced to consolidate his gains, and never penetrated any further.

The great Inca—the tenth Inca, sometimes called the “greatest Inca”—Yupanqui, possibly had something old Rocca and Prince Yuhuar lacked. He refused to admit that a mountain could stop a man.

Ten thousand of his soldiers were sent to fight the peaks, the Indians, the mosquitoes, to follow up the gains of Yuhuar. This expedition penetrated the montana, swept over the plains, fought its way to the great Rio Madre de Dios, sailed down the river on hastily constructed rafts, engaged the formidable Chunchos tribes, lost thousands of men in battle and to disease, pushed on into the land of the Musus, but with numbers too small for continued victories. Tired, they stopped finally to count only 1,000 men of the original mighty force.

Any other such little band might have been exterminated, but the Incas had a way about them. They were nobody's fools; they knew they could not fight. They decided to do a lot of talking, instead. They sold the Indians on their “friendship,” demonstrated their superior culture, obtained an ascendancy over the vastly superior numbers, threw away their weapons and with

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diplomacy won a victory such as their kings had dreamed of for many years.

The frankly admiring Musus did their bidding in all things submitted to their suggestions, adopted their religion, sent ambassadors back to Cuzco to worship the Incas' "Child of the Sun," married the sons and daughters of the Incas, accepted their intellectual "slavery" with enthusiasm.

This story accounts for today's traces of the warlike character of the mountain Indians of many parts of South America. The Inca influence was further stamped upon the people of the conquered lands when the downfall of Huaynal Capac and the entire Inca nation doomed the Incas and their descendants among the Musus to permanent "exile."

Many thousands of lives and enormous treasures were squandered by the princes of Peru in the subjugation of the montana. Mighty rulers in Cuzco, restless and impatient to add to their dominions and power, were inflamed to hysteria by the persistent story of El Dorado. This was the greatest of the empires reputedly situated east and north of the capital. Some of the "cities" were large and populous, with streets paved with gold. The inhabitants bathed in a fabulous lake, called Parima, with beaches of golden sand. In El Dorado lived the "Gilded King" who was anointed with oil, smeared by courtiers over his body, and then covered with a layer of gold dust blown upon him ceremoniously through long reeds. Mineral and vegetable treasures of unbelievable value were reported by all travelers into the interior.

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After 1538, with the defeat of the Almagro faction in the battle of Salimas, near Cuzco, still other leaders got down to the serious business of plotting the discovery and subjugation of El Dorado. Commissioned by Hernando Pizarro, and accompanied by "historians," Pedro de Candia and Pedro Anzulo led two armies into the Beni. Reports of Indians that the fabled city always lay "just a little further ahead" led the invaders on and on, but finally both forces were turned back by privations, and took to the Spanish butcher no longed-for treasures, but brought him stories of amazing adventures and reports which further inflamed the cupidity of greedy adventurers. One of the "historian's" stories follows:

"Juan Alvarez Maldonado made an expedition from Cuzco in the year 1561. He descended the eastern range of the Andes, and had scarcely cleared the rough and rocky ground of the slope when his party encountered two pigmies. They shot the female and the male died of grief six days afterward.

"Following the course of the great river Mano downward, at a distance of 200 leagues they landed upon a beach, and a piquet of soldiers penetrated the woods. They found the trees so tall as to exceed an arrow shot in height, and so large that six men with joined hands could scarcely circle them. Here they found lying upon the ground a man five yards in height, members in proportion, long snout, projecting teeth, vesture of beautiful leopard skin, short and shriveled, and for a walking stick a tree which he played with as a cane. On his attempting to rise, they shot him dead and returned to the

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boat to give notice to their companions. Those went to the spot and found traces of his having been carried off. Following the tracks toward a neighboring hill, they heard thence such shouts and vociferations that they were astounded, and horror-stricken, fled."

Another:

"Between the years 1639 and 1648, Pedro Tomas de Chaves, a Dominican, entered upon the Chunchos, from Cochabamba in Bolivia. He took twelve of them to Lima, where they were baptized. He then went back and lived among them for fourteen years, making many expeditions. His last was in 1645 among the Moxos Indians of the Mamore. Here he cured a cacique of some infirmity, and the Emperor of the Musus (this is the great Paititi, or Golden King of the Paniards) sent 600 men to the cacique of the Moxos demanding that the reverend father should be sent to cure his queen. The Moxos were very unwilling to part with their physician, but threats of extermination delivered by the ambassadors of the emperor induced compliance, and the padre was carried off on the shoulders of the Indians. After a travel of thirty days he came to the banks of a stream so wide that it could scarcely be seen across [supposed to be the Beni]. Here the Indian ambassadors had left their canoes. Loosing them from the banks, they launched, went downstream twelve days, then landed. Here the father found a large town inhabited by an incredible number of savages, all soldiers, guarding this great port of the river and entrance into the empire of the Musua. No women were to be seen; they lived in another town a league off,

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and only came in by day to bring food and drink to the warriors, and returned at night.

"He observed that the river at this place divided into many arms, all appearing navigable, and formed large islands on which were great towns. He traveled hence twenty-seven days, when he arrived at court. The king came out to meet him, dressed in the finest and most delicate feathers of different colors. He treated his guests with great courtesy, had a sumptuous feast prepared for him and told him that hearing of his wonderful powers as a physician, he had sent for him to cure the queen of a disease which had baffled the skill of all his doctors. The good father remarked that he was no physician, and had not been bred to that art, but observing the queen was beset with devils, he exorcised her according to the formulary, whereby she was thankfully made a Christian. He was eleven months in the court of the Paititi, at the end of which time seeing that the wine and flour of the Sacred Elements were giving out, and having baptized an infinite number of infants in 'Articulo Mortis,' he took leave of Their Majesties, recommending to the queen that she hold fast to the faith she had received, abstaining from all offense toward God. He refused from the king a great present of gold, silver, pearls and rich feathers, whereat the king and courtiers wondered greatly."

The defeated followers of Almagro, flying from before the face of the still victorious Pizarro, did find to the southeast of Cuzco a country answering in some degree to the description of the fabulous El Dorado.

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This was the valley of Tipuani, the country of the present-day goitered people, the home of Carmen and Carmelita, of Nina, and the scene of the operations of Dr. Pedro. There they found gold washings of fabulous value; they conquered the Indians and sent many large shipments of gold to Spain. They ranged far and wide, founded many towns and villages and enslaved all the people they met.

From Tipuani came some of the gold the Spaniards sent in the shape of an ox's head weighing 200 pounds. The Spaniards developed gold washings from Tipuani to San Juan on the Rio Cocos, and Charles V, who received the ox's head, gave the title of "Royal City" to the village and ennobled its inhabitants.

But it was only a matter of time before the "ennobled" citizens revolted against the Spaniards, killed them wholesale, and destroyed and ravaged Spanish towns and villages everywhere. San Juan is not far from the spots on the map of South America marked "unexplored." Men to this day fear to enter some parts of Territorio de Los Colonias del Nordeste and the upper department of La Paz because of the hatred the Indians still fervently hold for the white man.

The Spaniards were not the only ones who had searched for El Dorado in the Beni land. We know that Fawcett believed the stories of the lost cities of gold enthusiastically. Miners and priests, adventurers of every country, had followed his footsteps, and now here we were doing the same thing—only we were looking for him and not a gaudy paradise.

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Fawcett had plunged over this trail himself many years before our little mule's heels kicked up the dust. Like Pizarro's men, he headed for beckoning horizons, but in his case thirst for knowledge kindled his spirits, whereas the Spanish butcher men were lured only by the hope of finding gold. If Fawcett had found a back door to his garden of Eden, Tom had a clue which might help us locate him somewhere in the wilds. Tom voiced his theory when we pulled stakes in Huanay and started our trek northeast to Puerto Pando where the Rio Kaka joins the great River Beni.

This part of the trip toward the jumping-off place prompted wild, exciting emotions. Now walking at last toward the threshold of savagery, I hardly paid attention to Tom's story of Fawcett's Eno's Fruit Salts habit, which might lead us to his living person or his grave.

Fawcett left behind him many empty Eno's Fruit Salts bottles on Bolivia's trails. I have one, which I obtained from a jungle Negro family descended from Portuguese slaves. The explorer had left this behind many years before when he stopped to rest and eat a banana in the thatched house near Huanay. Another bottle holds a candle in the cacique's home in Mapiri. When you confront a civilized Eno bottle in the land of Callaguaya herbs and the empire of Epsom and CC pills, the experience somehow gives you shocking pause.

"Fawcett used a bottle in no time," Tom explained. "He had the habit, I guess. He always brought along a regular medicine chest. If we find some of his bottles

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north of Ixiamas, Fawcett or his bones won't be far away."

A British laxative, and Tom's own pet theory that Fawcett loved Bolivia too much to stay away too long—these were our clues to one of the greatest disappearances of history—a broom to fight a windmill.

But anyway, we could be right. Hold on, Fawcett, I'll be there!

22.

Curare, the Blossom of Life

“White man, white man,
What have you done?
Got yourself hit by a blowing gun?
Well, you got as much sense as a monkey, eh?
Pull it out, suck it out,
Don’t let it stay!”

ANYONE WHO CONTEMPLATES A VISIT TO THE CURARE country would do well to memorize this jungle jingle. Whence it came no one knows. I heard it from Tom en route to the Madidi.

While this is about curare, or curari, or urara or woorari, monkeys and blowguns and stretches of Bolivia where savages steep the poison from strychnos plants, nevertheless anyone who has ever whispered an unprintable New Orleans’s blue song behind the barn in his youth will feel nostalgic emotions if he hears this rhyme in the jungle.

It all goes back to Africa and via New Orleans to Beni

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land in some inexplicable roundabout way, as anyone can plainly see. For in the 1890's you could hear Negroes sweeping the streets of the French Market plaintively singing:

“Thought I heard Judge Fogarty say:
‘Thirty days in the Stockade,
Take him away.’”

Negroes of New Orleans knew well Judge Fogarty, who invariably sentenced their kind, whether drunk or vagrant, to thirty days cleaning the dirty streets of the Crescent City. Judge Fogarty was considerably more than a minor police magistrate—he was the first sanitary commissioner of the city. Later, little boys put dirty words to Judge Fogarty's chant, first sung by one Buddy Bolden, perhaps the real father of the blues, words which can't be quoted fully here, but many a man, and maybe a woman or two, will recall:

“Thought I heard my baby say . . .”

Anyway, anyone who ever enters the curare country of South America should learn the jingle as applied to the taking away of curare barbs. It may save his life.

If struck by the poisoned barb of a blowgun, all the victim has to do is to ape the monkey. He will have an even chance to live if this advice is followed, and almost anyone has as much sense as a monkey; so “Pull it out, suck it out, don't let it stay.”

If the part of your anatomy where the poisoned barb

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strikes is available to your mouth, you will surely live if you pull it out, glue your lips to the sound and suck with enthusiasm. Whether you swallow the poison or not makes little difference, because curare is not lethal when taken in small quantities, internally.

If a barb treated with curare hits you where you cannot apply your mouth, and you are alone, pull the weapon out quickly, lie down flat, breathe as fast as possible and keep still otherwise. If you have a partner along who has not been shot, he should know enough to give you continuous artificial respiration until the poison has worn off. If the arrow is pulled out quickly enough, you may be sure that the dose of poison, when accompanied by this type of first aid, is sub-lethal.

Curare, gummy, brownish-black gelatine, is derived from the nine-tendriled strychnos plant, which writers of murder mysteries delight in describing as "the flower of death." But it's all according to the way you look at it. Because curare might well be called "the blossom of life," since the poison which has killed so many monkeys and Indians and white explorers has also been used to save human life in many therapeutic applications. Amazing experiments with the toxic paste are now being conducted in the treatment of paresis and lockjaw, and too many other afflictions of mankind to begin to enumerate. So it's all in the point of view.

As for me, I only wanted to find out what all of the shouting was about. The mystery of curare, increased by detective stories for generations, interested me as much as the disappearance of Fawcett. In my own case,

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scientific, clinical research struck my fancy only slightly. My purpose was entirely to get to the fundamental low-down about the peg on which a thousand writers have hung the threads of creepy yarns with so much license that even humorless Jivaros and Clunes would split their sides in laughter.

And before I left the jungle I had:

- 1) drunk a curare cocktail;
- 2) stabbed myself with a barb treated with curare gum;
- 3) proved that complete unconsciousness quickly follows introduction of the poison into the blood stream;
- 4) found from personal experience that curare death would be the most painless, merciful death imaginable; and
- 5) played with the idea that capital punishment should be carried out, if it should be at all, with this humane gelatine of the Amazon basin.

Once, on a nameless tributary of the Madidi, I saw a monkey pull, or rather snatch, a poisoned barb from its arm so quickly that the action was electric. The monkey jumped through four trees, scampered like a drunken thing reeling from bough to bough. The confident Indian huntsman went to pick up the kill, but could not find the victim anywhere. An hour later, we saw the little fellow sailing through the high branches, mocking us, jabbering monkey talk. You half expected to see him thumb his nose. For this monkey had instinctively done the only thing to keep his flesh out of a stew. We knew it was the same monkey, because he carried in one of his

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almost human hands the eleven-inch barb which had hit him.

The dose of curare gum which entered the monkey's veins was too small to kill, and/or the monkey had not allowed the barb to remain in his flesh long enough to take full effect. This gave me the idea of testing the sensation of curare with a jab no greater than caused the monkey to reel. If a little monkey could be shot by a curare barb and live, then why not a man who weighs 185 pounds?

This plan took a while to jell, and meanwhile we had to go monkey-hunting.

But you can't throw a barb with your hand. To kill a monkey you have to have a blowgun if your weapon is curare. Any Indian north of latitude 20 will show you how to make one, if you don't know already from reading detective stories or pulp yarns with South American settings. But, for the sake of the record, here's the best way to go about it.

Go out into the jungle and find yourself a long, straight piece of the palm which the Indians call chonta. If you want to build a formidable set of weapons you can also use this heavy, elastic wood to make bows, clubs and spears. The pole must be eight or nine feet long, two inches in diameter at the mouth and must taper down to half an inch at the other extremity.

Pick out a good, straight specimen, cut it in two longitudinally, then hollow out a canal along the center of each side. Smooth these canals faithfully, polish them, rub them. Use sand and wood and elbow grease and un-

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erring finesse. Take a lot of time on this procedure. If your troughs don't match perfectly after several hours of work, throw the stuff away, get a new one and start all over again.

If you are sure that everything is even and the parts match, bring them together, wool them with twine, tight, confidently. When the two parts fit nicely and are perfectly, firmly wooled, cover the whole thing with wax mixed with resin. The resin makes it hard.

At the mouth end fit two boars' teeth, one on each side, correctly to aim the air of your lungs through the polished canal. On top, place for a sight the curved front tooth of a rabbit or a squirrel.

Any light wood will do for your arrow, although the best headhunters in Bolivia, Brazil and Ecuador prefer a foot-long center fiber of a palm leaf, or wild cane, either of which must be about as thick as an old-fashioned sulphur match. Wrap the end of the arrow which is next to your mouth with a bit of wild cotton, which the Indians call huimba. Point the business end sharply, dip it in sticky, black curare, grasp your long pucuma with both hands close to your mouth, if you can, and blow like hell. You'll miss your aim by a hundred feet the first hundred times. Later, when you learn to hold the weapon steadily, you'll improve. The best marksmen never try to balance the pucuma with the left hand. Centuries of killing men and birds and beasts have shown them the hard way is the best way.

You have to be strong to do this, but the most important ingredient is patience. After a few months you may

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be able to hit a monkey a few paces away. Indians kill small birds with ease at forty paces.

Besides the blowgun and the arrows, or darts, the rest of your equipment will consist of a gourd of curare, a cane joint for a quiver, and some sort of cured melon for your huimba.

This is the orthodox way of making a blowgun, and the orthodox equipment. Manufacturing processes for curare differ in different localities. Some tribes never have heard of curare. They use other vegetable poisons mixed with red pepper and deleterious juices of angry vines. These stun small birds, monkeys, rabbits and squirrels, but are not in themselves fatal. Curare, alone of all the vegetable extracts of South America, does the deadly paralyzing job, brings the merciful death to any prey, human or wild denizen of the strange montana land. Curare is the final authority, quiet death of the jungle.

I learned how to make the stuff from the bark of the strychnos plant from a pretty Indian girl on the Rio Chuniari, a tributary of the Rio Beni, just a little south-east of Ixiamas. She was naked to her hips and bare almost all over, but she wore lightning bugs in her hair on the right side, which meant that her heart was free. Mine was too.

23.

Illiacia

THE GIRL WAS ILLIACIA. TOM AND I CAME UPON HER after sundown on the trail as we approached the interior village of Cuguiplyaya. At first we saw only a bobbing chandelier tracing a crazy calligraphy in the gloom. This was caused by Illiacia running fast down the sharply angled footpath with dozens of lightning bugs, the *lucienaga*, imprisoned on the right side of her coiffeur. If she had worn these on the left side, the location would have meant she was either married or pledged to someone, who might have been an uncle, a stepbrother, or even a man from some distant tribe who was no closer kin than cousin.

To Illiacia's people, incest was not mandatory, but was just a practice of convenience. There was nothing shocking about it. It was so simple to pick up a wife in one's own village where everyone was related, anyway, than to make an arduous courting journey into the distant churning verdancy of the jungle. Such trips would take days of marching. So incest really was inspired almost entirely by expediency. This was especially true with

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girls themselves, who, however, always excitedly welcomed any strange wanderer from an alien tribe. Something new was always added by such arrivals. Their presence stimulated the virgins and the widows of the village. For here were men who represented mystery—those who had not been companions at breakfast for a lifetime. They always found eager, expectant brides, or stole away to assignation in the leafy tumult of the bush.

Illiacia was one of those who had kept a secret rendezvous with a bronzed Lochinvar from a boisterous faraway warrior tribe. She had not married the errant visitor. When she met him she had worn her lightning bugs on the right side of her head, a daring and flirtatious thing to do, the equivalent of a debutante selecting a perfume with a naughty name like *Venez me prendre* (Come take me). The Indian had taken her at her word.

That's why she ran so rapidly toward us that night on the trail. She thought we were Callaguayas. The girl was worried. The Callaguayas were overdue with their emerald bullets, and Illiacia had no desire to be spun and twirled in dizzy circles day after day by a Mosotene midwife so her baby wouldn't "settle."

Either the girl's own timing was all wrong or the Callaguaya's schedule was away off. It made no difference which. Whatever the reason, it was real tragedy for the twelve-year-old naked Indian belle.

Tom first noticed her forty yards away. He squinted powerfully.

"I'm damned if it's not a Mosotene wench," he said. "And she wears an invitation, too."

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As the old man regarded the rippling figure of the girl, he seemed for a moment to smack his lips. "They don't wear their bugs that way," he said, "unless they mean business. These Indian girls are different from the Tipuanians."

But for once old Tom was wrong. Illiacia brought no "invitation" in her scramble to meet us. She ran on only in personal panic, mixed with relief that a solution to her urgent problem was at hand. She shouted a happy greeting.

"Musa, Callaguaya!"

Then she saw us. White men! She realized her mistake. She stopped short, angry, outraged, a few feet away. We halted as abruptly, ourselves. Tom's brow wrinkled characteristically. The macho snorted as though to punctuate the drama. Illiacia snapped a crackling string of Mosotene protests, furiously femininely. Her torso trembled, her face was fired with high emotion.

"It wasn't fair, that's what it wasn't."

Illiacia swayed momentarily as she suddenly felt the impact of despair. She fell to the ground in a moment, sobbing. It was then you knew she was a little girl. It was your baby sister crying when someone broke her doll, or promised candy had been forgotten when her Daddy came home from a trip. It was your French mistress ranting in the Rue Jacob hideaway where you kept her happy in Montparnasse until she found you flirting with an Italian girl on the terrace of the Dome.

That was Illiacia, tritely the eternal woman, lying sobbing there in the jungle. You'd heard them cry before,

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for good reason, or for none at all, and as far as you were concerned, it was a good weapon.

I patted my bottle of green, gooey juice buttoned in an inner pocket.

"Well, Tom," I said. "It appears we are just in time."

The old Irishman didn't quite comprehend.

"What the hell are you talking about?" he asked.

"That I've got what it takes," I said. "I'm as good as a Callaguaya for this case, or at least until one comes along."

"You mean that abortin' medicine?" Tom demanded.

"Why not?" I asked. "The girl's in trouble, and she's damned good-looking, too."

"That green stuff's worth a mint," Tom almost screamed. "If you give up a drop, you'll be loonier than I've always thought."

"Nuts," I said to Tom. "It doesn't take much. I'll keep enough for analysis when I get back to New York."

"You're an idiot to take such a chance. What's another bastard, more or less, anyway?"

"I'll be careful with what's left," I promised.

"You always were a sucker with the girls," Tom charged.

"But I didn't have to make a trip with Chita to Sorata," I said quickly.

This hurt the old man, but it quieted him down. I walked over to Illiacia, and patted her shoulder. She looked up, sullenly. Then her eyes lighted upon the object I held forth in my right hand. She recognized its color. Daddy hadn't forgotten the candy, after all. The

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French mistress had been seeing things on the Left Bank. There had never been an Italian girl, or anyone else. Relief, the joy of it, wiped the tears away, and delighted giggles followed the sobs. The Callaguaya had come. Thank the sun god on the Island of the Moon in Lake Titicaca for his arrival. Even if he wasn't a conventional-looking medicine man. Even if he did have fair skin and a silky brown beard. He had the emerald bullet, anyway, so what did it matter how he looked?

No midwife would spin Illiacia now. Thank the Moon God and the humbugs of the jungle. Praises be to the *Malgré-lui* and the magic of the shaman and the chemistry of the roots and the herbs of the screeching tangled growth. And thank the last most. Illiacia was no fool. Thank them all, singly, in combination.

Thank me, too, deliriously, with an embrace, or anything else I might desire. But first a swig of green goo. The miracle yet must come. It took a swig, a little one, maybe. But it took a swig, and Illiacia reached gratefully for the bottle. But I held on tight.

Tom looked on all the while like a hypnotized old man. It was the first time he had ever seemed lost for words, and he had to struggle for the ones which finally came.

"That's right, boy," he said. "You hold on to the bottle. Just pour a little down her throat. Don't let her get her hands on it."

Tom muttered a command to Illiacia in choppy Mosotene dialect. I don't know what he said, but the girl stood

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still, locked her hands behind her back and tilted her chin. She puckered her lips expectantly.

"Take out the cork now," Tom whispered to me, "and pour just a drop or two. You can give her more later, if necessary. You've got the treasure of the Incas in that little bottle."

The lightning bugs in Illiacia's head blinked pin points of bright yellow radiance. The macho snorted again. A wild Bolivian loon laughed maniacally to mock a fool as I withdrew the cork in the sulky half-light of the jungle dusk. My hand shook and gooseflesh erupted high like the feathered pits on a plucked turkey's skin.

"Easy, easy," Tom pleaded.

What was I afraid of? Losing the emerald-colored juice? Or the thought that abortionists go to jail in civilization? Or the potency of the dose? I couldn't answer these questions then and I can't answer them now. All I know is that Illiacia flashed a warm and reassuring smile and my nerves quieted, and not a drop of priceless "abortin' medicine" settled a speck of jungle duck. Suddenly I placed the bottle firmly upon the girl's lips and I heard a gurgle and I saw her swallow convulsively. Then it was that I pulled the bottle quickly away from her mouth. I replaced the stopper with a feeling of deadly deliberation and put the little "gold mine" safely back in an inside pocket and buttoned it carefully. Illiacia's arms fell to her side, limply. I felt weak all over. Old Tom sat down on a flat stone and filled his pipe with bitter, black tobacco.

As he lighted it with a match from his rubber pouch,

ILLIACIA

I saw his hand tremble, but just a trifle. And he puffed too much, too.

"Sit down, kid," he said to me, "and rest yourself a while."

This was the first kind word old Tom ever uttered, as far as I was concerned, and I obeyed. The great oversized bowl of his glowing pipe lighted up his face occasionally as he drew incredible drafts of asphyxiating smoke into his lungs. It was dark now, but the crater's fire showed me that he stole furtive glances my way and that he could also see Illiacia sitting by my side, huddling very close on such short acquaintance.

But, oddly enough, the old man this time didn't seem to mind, even when Illiacia pressed her face close to my ear and sighed arousingly.

"Maybe," Tom observed, "you're not such a damned fool, at that. I'd give all the emerald bullets in South America to have a girl feel that way about me."

"It's just gratitude, Tom," I said.

Neither of us had spoken of Chita since we raked the rocky soil of a Tipuani foothill over her grave, but when Tom said this I heard his sigh as clearly as the swish of vampire bats' wings beating the vile, mite-filled air of Andean grottoes. This convicted him of a heretofore undetermined sentimentality. It was a dead give-away, as eloquent as though he had mentioned the Chileana's name and shed a tear.

But you never heard his sigh. It just didn't happen. You had better sense than to mention it. Tom's mushy side was armor-plated; protected, too, with a chemistry

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of acid too lethal to provoke. This flea-bitten old man—why, hell, he was a Tom cat and you were a mouse. You didn't want to be gobbled up, did you?

So I just sang, self-consciously:

“Thought I heard my baby say . . .”

In a moment Tom was keeping time with his foot. Illiacia tried to repeat the words. Her efforts were Chineseey, but she caught the tune and was delighted with herself. When I switched to the curare song, she did a little better.

“White man, white man,
What have you done?
Got yourself hit by a blowing gun?
Well, you got as much sense as a monkey, eh?
Pull it out,
Suck it out,
Don't let it stay!”

This singing cheered us, Tom and me, no little. After all, I had some experiments to make with the poison of a plant hell, and we had some sleeping to do that night. We had come a long way.

I pulled Illiacia to her feet. Tom got the tired maço ambling and brought up the rear like a good fellow, allowing the girl and me to walk along ahead toward her village.

“You got plenty of Mosotene to learn before you can

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get very far with that gal," Tom said. "Better you two go together. A sleeping dictionary's all right to learn a language, but it can't sleep all the time."

"You've been in Paris, too?" I asked Tom.

"Hell," said the old man, "I've been everywhere." And you suddenly knew that was no lie.

Where was this guy, Fawcett, anyway?

“Where Are You, Fawcett?”

CURARE! FAWCETT! YOU COULDN'T THINK OF ONE WITHOUT thinking of the other.

In one of the last interviews the great explorer gave in Rio de Janeiro before he started his last jungle journey, he told Brazilian officials about a premonition of death. There's plenty of proof of that. And the uneasy feeling was caused by the man's enormous knowledge of the drug and the Indians who unerringly aim it at an enemy.

He predicted that his death would be caused by curare barbs blown from silent long reeds by the lung air of savages. If this death did strike Fawcett, it was sudden and quick and fulfilled the hope of the explorer that slow-working disease would not be his fortune. He preferred anything rather than a tedious, lingering illness in raw country where no medical facilities were available. It seemed appropriate now that I was finally in the heart of the curare country, that I should learn something about curare—it might help in the search.

“WHERE ARE YOU, FAWCETT?”

Illiacia made curare like a Southern Negro mammy makes biscuits. She would teach me. But the Yanqui in me wanted something else tangible—a piece of Fawcett's equipment, his dental architecture with a filling a London dentist might recognize and identify . . . a muffler, his wife. Where was his equipment? What furtive, reddish-chocolate-colored aboriginal wore his shirt? Where were his side arms?

“If Fawcett's in a jungle paradise,” I thought, “he wouldn't be needing any weapons. You don't have to do any shooting in paradise!”

In the jungle your fancy keeps you busy and your mind off the nonsense of everything, especially the thought that Illiacia will soon be well again. She waited almost too long for the emerald bullet, but her nurses now say she'll soon be quite okay again.

She's the best curare cook in South America, and she'll whip up a mess for you any time—or oppi, either. Oppi's what Tom wants. He knows all about curare. It's no mystery to him.

“It's just a poison you dip a barb into,” he says. “You can get any and all sorts of poisons anywhere, but only in these parts can you get oppi. That's what an old man needs—a good, strong jungle aphrodisiac. It'll make a young girl look at him any time, and what's more—well, what's more.”

But as far as you are concerned, you don't need any oppi. Maybe you'll return sometime when you do. You're just plain selfish, that's what you are. But to hell with

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oppi—you'll think of that later, maybe. You already have a whale of a lot of cc's of green juice, which is more important for the young of either sex. It saves both a lot of penalties. You'll sell it by the ounce, that's what you'll do when you return, bootleg it for a hell of a price in New York and everywhere else.

You'll make the girls smile again in Kansas City and East Orange, too. Maybe a couple of quarts a year could be sold in Conyers, Georgia—on the sly, of course. Be careful! That's your home town!

The main thing is that you have it. And there may be other uses for it besides the license it brings to females so inclined. For instance, like ergot, it may be a fine thing in parturition. But that's something for medical science to determine when they analyze it after you return to New York. So all of this business can wait. Meanwhile, it's safe in your pocket, tightly corked, well guarded. Illiacia knows you have it, and Tom, and Musa. But Illiacia has been warned not to tell, and Tom's your partner, anyway; and Musa, hundreds of miles away, can be trusted to keep his silence because if he told of his betrayal his life would be forfeit.

All of these things you tell yourself, but having the bottle in your possession makes you nervous, nevertheless. Its safe-keeping is the biggest responsibility of your life. If it really turns out to be beneficial in the respectable practice of gynecology, you'll donate it to medicine, over Tom's dead body, if necessary. Flirting with this thought gives you a lofty feeling to compensate for the recurring sinking sensation over the matter of your in-

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gratitude in the case of old Musa. After all, he did save your life.

It just went to show you how many things tried to crowd Fawcett out of your plans. But all seem miraculously intertwined. You wouldn't let Fawcett down. Hold on, old man, and your son, too, and Raleigh Rimmel. Never a day passes that we don't think of you, if that means anything, and of the route we believe you took to span the wild Matto Grosso. We are getting on. If our calculations are right we'll pick up better clues than Eno bottles where the Rio Hunduno flows from the jungle near Ixiamas eastward toward the Beni.

That Eno bottle holding a candle in Illiacia's shack we know you left behind, old man. But we may find a waterproof, shockproof London-made watch, or one of your special jungle cutting blades with a British trade mark further on.

When Fawcett set out to locate his golden civilization, he carried with him more and better equipment than any expedition had ever before assembled for a jungle journey. Medicines, rifles, pistols, sharp machete-like blades, for slashing trails through undergrowth, and ammunition, and nets and cots, two portable typewriters, matches, pencils, two fountain pens and a supply of ink, writing paper, antitoxin and hypodermic needles. Why had none of this been found? This was as great a mystery as any connected with the famous disappearance. The Indians' curiosity and their inability to keep a secret long would surely, I believe, have eventually turned up at least one item of his supplies, somehow, somewhere, if

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he had been killed. Indians are boastful, full of pride. Most of them like to show off. A fountain pen might become an ornament for a chief's necklace, or a yellow pencil conceivably decorate the hair-do of a warrior.

Had Fawcett been killed, as so often rumored and as often denied, why had never a single possession of the trio of white men come to light anywhere? Did this prove anything? To Tom it did, and it made sense to me—that Fawcett lived! The jungle isn't big enough to hide a crime of as much importance as the slaying of one of the greatest explorers of his day. Any Indians who would have slain Fawcett by blowgun, torture or on a fiery stake, would have prized his possessions as much as his head.

Things get around in the jungle. The amazing "telegraph" carries gossip as fast as the homing fly which alighted on Musa's arm. Four days before we arrived in one village, the alcalde knew we were coming. He told us, when we pulled up before his hut in a community clearing, where we had camped four nights before. How did he know? Don't ask me. I never ceased to marvel, although now it seems even more miraculous than at the time.

So if Fawcett had been slain, some imponderable leak, some "Morse code" of the great vegetable hell, would long ago have tapped out the story of massacre. Eventually it would have trickled into Para or La Paz or Riberalta, or Cuzco or Manaos. Where human beings live secrets cannot be kept—for long—and Indians are created in God's own image even as the prize gossip and tale-

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bearer of your own neighborhood, or the washwoman who tosses tidbits of slander over the fence in a loud whisper as she hangs things out to dry.

Tom and I believed Fawcett still lived, for these and other reasons too, in spite of a Brazilian Indian girl who testified after a long trip to the Atlantic coast that the explorer had been beheaded. She swore she saw his head, shriveled to the size of a tangerine by a secret hot-sand process of interior savages, and adorning a pole before a powwow house. We believed Fawcett lived, in spite of anything other explorers said to the contrary, Dyott or Brazilian searchers, or the studied findings of newspapers back home.

We believed a blue-eyed Indian baby a savage mother tried to hide from the stares of searchers in a jungle boat was the child of one of the white men in the party. Indians just don't allow their women to accept white men as lovers and kill them off. No white man in the heart of the red aboriginal's empire ever wooed a dusky maiden without the full knowledge of all the people of the tribe. Indians have a way of knowing what is going on. You may get killed before you win your Pocahontas, but that happens only if her people don't approve. You may have to wait for full knowledge of their attitude until you are dead, but that just goes to strengthen our theory.

All three men were in excellent health. Jack Fawcett had been trained as an athlete since early youth to meet jungle dangers and hardships in the career of explorer and scientist which he had planned and which his father encouraged. Rimmel, the Los Angeles lad, was hardy

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and strong, equal to the jungle's demand for stamina and endurance.

Fawcett himself was an old hand at this game—eighteen years of it under every conceivable condition in parts wilder, if possible, than those for which he headed, had left him unscathed. He knew a flock of dialects. He was a resourceful jungler in conversing with signs, or disarming suspicious savages with friendly, easily understood gestures. Here was no greenhorn, here was no man to take foolhardy chances. Here was the white master of the jungle himself, a well-trained disciple of old Tom, a man who knew the insects and the cannibal fish and the tiger and the scorpion on land and in the stream and in the air.

And I leaned heavily, too, on a lot of Tom's pet theories about his disappearance gained from intimate association with the romantic Colonel. "You can bet your mosquito net," he said more than once, "that if Fawcett told the newspapers he was heading for the Xingu in Brazil, the river was the last place he had in mind going.

"I tell you Fawcett was the damnedest man I ever saw. He was always so close-mouthed about his plans that sometimes I didn't even know our destination until we were well out on the trail. If Fawcett said Xingu, he meant anything but Xingu. I think he picked a hell of a long, roundabout way to get to the Territorio Colonias del Nordeste in Bolivia. He was always talking about his 'paradise' being out there. And when he set out to get somewhere he got through all right."

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Possibly not even Jack and young Rimmel knew their destination when they set out from Cuyaba, Brazil, with two guides. Sailing under sealed orders! Fawcett was dramatic. He was capable of such a gesture. And his young companions, thirsting for a brush with the unknown, might well have welcomed such mystery on the part of the master.

But you believe what you want to believe about such things. We wanted to believe that Fawcett was alive, and to us this was as true as the sore on our little macho's back and the first suggestion of a raw place starting because he was clinched too tight for the jagged terrain.

Maps of Bolivia show a lot of white spaces, and these mean “unexplored.” These white spots can hide anything—a dinosaur or a “garden of Eden” or a ghost out of prehistoric Tiahuanacu, the oldest city of the New World, or Tunca-Punca, meaning ten doors, the ruin of a great tribunal of justice in the Bolivian highlands which archaeology has yet to explain. Or any ruins, or any El Dorado. White man just doesn't know what exists in these “white spots” on your map. One of them may hide Fawcett's paradise.

Fawcett was the most indefatigable of all to try and try again to make the blank spaces take some well-defined form. Tom penetrated much further than Fawcett into some of them, and I hit a couple or more on our expedition, but Tom's journeys were never dictated by the hankering which drove the scientist into the morbidic jungle, as we well know. He took in his stride, with a stubborn and self-conscious nonchalance, trips which

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would have made headlines in the great papers of the world had the editors only known.

Fawcett's was a justification of zeal, and if such needs a champion, he had plenty. He gave a lot of the world gooseflesh—the stevedores on the docks in Liverpool, and his fellows in the sacrosanct and hallowed halls of the Royal Geographical Society. Here was a “gent” explorer, afraid of neither the bullet of the Hun in World War I in the Old World nor of the “silent death” in the New, nor anything the “white spots” had to offer. Here was a man worth looking for!

Jungle Stuff

HERE'S HOW FAWCETT LOOKED TO THE READER IN THE British *Who's Who*, 1926:

"Fawcett, Lieut. Col. P. H., D.S.O. retired; Royal Artillery; *b.* Torquay, 1867, *s.* of E. B. Fawcett, Torquay, and *g.s.* of Henry Fawcett, of Broadfields, York, and Myra, *d.* of Col. A. M. McDougall, Bengal Army; *m.* Nina, *d.* of G. W. Paterson, Ceylon Civil Service; two *s.* one *d.* *Educ.*: Newton College, S. Devon; Westminster (Exhibitioner); R.M.A., Woolwich. Joined R.A., 1886; served Ceylon, England, Malta, Hong Kong, Ireland, in R.G.A. and Staff; received R.G.S. Diploma, 1900, for surveying; mission interior Morocco, 1901; lent to Bolivian Government as Boundary Commissioner, 1906-10; retired from Army, 1910, continuing exploration in S. America, returning for war, close 1914; commanded Brigade R.F.A. Heavy Artillery, and was C.B.S.O. in France 'til 1919 (D.S.O. despatches four times); returned S. America, 1919-22, for exploration; received Founders Medal, R.G.S., 1917. *Publications*: Geographical, travel, and journalistic arti-

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cles in newspapers and magazines. *Recreations*: All sports, exploration, surveying and prospecting, artist (exhibitor Royal Academy in black and white), archæology, philosophy, yacht designing, building and navigating, motoring. *Address*: c/o Royal Bank of Canada, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, S. America. M:F. J. 1857."

This is Fawcett's "foot" in *Who's Who*, attesting in enormously restrained abbreviations to heroism, patriotism, bravery, artistry, philosophy, versatility. Under "Recreations," however, *Who's Who* failed to add restlessness. That's the "sport" Col. Fawcett most enjoyed.

Yes, here was a man worth looking for. A man who could build a yacht, thumb his nose at the Hun under heavy fire and bring despatches through at the risk of his life four times, who could navigate a battleship, sketch a nude in black and white, wash gold in jungle streams or search for a "Siamese husband" in a lost world. Here was a man worth looking for. A man who would sip a little oppi for the hell of it—experimentally—or chew a bit of the coca leaf on the trail, bargain for the "emerald bullet," and hunt for paradise in hell's bitter acres on the edge of incredibility. Here was a man worth looking for, all right, a man who just couldn't "stay put." If Fawcett had not been a gifted man, he might have been a hobo.

Tom was a Fawcett, without a Fawcett's education. But the same inner compulsion which made the Colonel tick drove Tom on and on. Only Tom didn't know why. Never mind—it doesn't matter. Don't feel sorry for old Tom. In New York he would have been lost,

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possibly a ragpicker, or you might expect to see him there lying flat on his belly over a sidewalk grating fishing for a coin with a weighted line "baited" with chewing gum. But in the jungle he was no stumblebum. There's no Bowery in the jungle.

The majesty and the "escape" of the jungle are inducements you never can forget. If there is something lacking in your character and temperament, then all the greater will be the pull. These were the things, no doubt, which enslaved old Tom and held him a willing prisoner in the wilds. For my part, being there probably made me the same sort of coward. Fighting the honest jungle's a lot easier than the empty repartee of café society. This was Tom's province. He was jealous of it, constantly annoyed by the presence of greenhorn invader.

Far back on the trail, after he had returned to Tipuani with his health certificate, we went one day together to bathe in the cold waters of the river, but well enough above the outlet of the engineers' sewerage trough to be safe from its cascading cargoes. Here was clean, icy water from glaciers which melted leisurely in the heights. We scrubbed the encrusted jungle dirt with "washrags" of rounded, porous stones which first we rubbed on bars of Octagon soap and then applied vigorously to lather our ankles, thighs and backs. The combination was miraculous. The filth melted away, the cold water enlivened our spirits. Tom dived in a harmless whirlpool which spun his willing little body like a cork and bathed the lye away. It was our "clothes-wringer" and we used

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its counterclockwise currents every high noon. No one ever drowned in the whirlpool, because it was a baby whirlpool, not a bottomless killer hole like some further down the river.

When he crawled back upon the big, flat rock we used for the headquarters of our bath, it was my turn to plunge into the vortex. The twisting waters wrenched me clean. Then back on the big flat rock, sixty feet wide, especially patterned for us alone. Reach up then and grab the sun—it's your towel; dry yourself on the Bolivian stove.

Our bath rock was an island to which we waded each day through shallow water. Here no ants could attack our naked flesh, and mosquitoes found the midday sun too hot to linger. We baked ourselves under heaven's tanning lamp and slept. And at this hour the parrots always quieted down, the beak-heavy toucan perched somewhere out of sight to rest his wings. The great purple frogs of the valley tired of their echoes and hushed themselves. The insect world placed its finger to its collective mouth, and shhed for silence. The noisy Tipuani River rapids got the idea, too, and now politely rolled on velvet. This was because Nature had to have a nap. It was siesta time in Tipuani, and nothing even crawled.

It's sacrilege to make a sound at this time, and when I shook old Tom violently and roused him from his sleep, he did a good job of lacing me down. "Turn over," he said, "you're having a bad dream!"

"No, Tom," I yelled excitedly. "I see a plane. Man, look!"

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"That's nightmare talk," he said. "There's no plane in Bolivia that can get over the Ancohuma pass."

"Damn it, Tom, it's a plane. Look!"

Tom turned exasperatingly over on his side.

"It may be a condor," he said.

"Tom, a condor hasn't got a gasoline motor. Listen."

Tom sat up only when he heard the laboring efforts of the mechanism.

We were not the only ones, the only things, that heard the alien roar. Nothing like this had ever happened before. The siesta of the valley had a shock. Insect life shook to consciousness with an instinctive howl; armadillos, the silent armored things, plunged in fright to deeper holes, and were the only examples of life which did not make a noise. Everything else behaved in concert, screamingly. The mechanical monster in the skies did wondrous things to earthbound things. This was a shuddering miracle.

Trembling as much as any frightened denizen of the plant hell was old Tom himself.

"Gad, gad, gad!" he exclaimed.

Now he was bolt upright upon his feet, taller than he had ever been, even in the Hamburgo bar when he shamed the Hun.

"Gad, gad, gad!"

"What is it, Tom? Who is it?"

"It's a flyin' machine," Tom said.

"Plane, monoplane, single-motored! How'd it get over the hump?"

"It's a demonstration, maybe," said Tom.

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"But who's holding the stick?" I demanded.

"Oh," said Tom, "the pilot's a crazy goddamned little fool named Doolittle."

"Tom," I asked excitedly, "is his first name Jimmy?"

"What the hell difference does it make?" Tom demanded. "The plane got over the hump, didn't it? The Doolittle guy I met back in La Paz said he could do it. He came down on a Grace boat. He *did* it."

The plane was flying low, skimming the tree tops lining the Tipuani. The natives in the village had never seen such a monstrous thing before. We heard their exclamations of consternation and alarm echoing above the motor's roar. Some fell on their faces; others, thunderstruck, stood dumb. But Tom and I danced deliriously upon our rock, waved our arms, shouted greetings in English to the pilot. The plane banked. The man at the controls waved, and as he skimmed a hundred feet above our head we saw a grinning Yankee face, a warm and mischievous face. The man saw our naked white bodies. We were his kind. He waved again, enthusiastically, and then zoomed upward just in time to miss scalping both of us.

The plane climbed fast, circling for altitude.

"He's going back to La Paz," Tom commented. "There's no place to land out here."

"It's a miracle he ever got in."

"He must have scraped the icicles off the top of the glacier to make it," Tom vowed. There was grudging admiration in his voice.

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"I hope he gets back all right. Eighteen thousand feet!"

"I do, too," Tom said fervently. "There are already too damned many white men in the jungle."

Yes, Tom was jealous of his jungle, and although he had been momentarily excited with the dramatic appearance of the plane, resentment of the intrusion soon welled. There was something brazen about its flight into the savage preserve.

"There won't be any privacy anywhere much longer," Tom prophesied ruefully. "Those contraptions will ruin the jungle yet."

The sight of the plane just made me homesick. It was a link to civilization, which I would have preferred not to be reminded of.

Jimmy Doolittle that year in South America demonstrated new-type planes for the Curtiss-Wright Company with normal cruising ceilings none had ever reached before.

"He's been raising hell with the condors," Tom said, "from Chile to Peru. They think the thing's a monster, and he's rattled the vicuña herds more than the Aymara hunters. As if they ain't wild enough already."

The modern note jarred the little man. He was grouchy and morose, more so than usual, for a week.

They can't do this to you, Tom. It's your jungle. Who the hell invited Doolittle, anyway?

Or the rococo Fawcett?

"Did you resent Fawcett, too, Tom, when he first showed up?"

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"I don't resent anybody," Tom grumbled.

"You're lying like hell, Tom, and you know it."

When you caught Tom dead wrong, you could get away with things like that.

"I'll admit I didn't exactly like him, at first," Tom conceded.

"And me, Tom? How about me?"

"Aw," he said embarrassed, half angry, "cut it out, will ya?"

And you did, because you knew better than to bait the old man too much.

"Fawcett and I are friends now, anyway," Tom said after a moment, "and I have proof, too. I was one of the last persons he wrote to before he set out from Cuyaba." He reached clumsily under his jacket and produced a perspiration-stained legal-size envelope.

"Read that," he demanded, triumphantly.

Tom handed me the letter as casually as though an indifferent archaeologist had suddenly uncovered a buried city, with a chance blow of a pick and decided it was more important to have a cup of tea than solve the riddle of the race. Here was a document as important to me as the fever of movement, a Rosetta stone which might unravel the hieroglyphics of my search for Fawcett. Yet it had been plastered for nine years in a woollen shirt pocket against the hairy chest of the wizened little old prospector, and never before revealed to any other man.

My hand trembled as I read the script in Fawcett's own hand.

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"Tom," I said, "why in hell didn't you turn this letter over to the authorities? It might have aided in the search for Fawcett years ago!"

"It was a confidential matter between Fawcett and me," Tom said simply. "Fawcett would have wished it that way, see? And that's the way it is. I showed it to you to prove that Fawcett and I are friends."

"You miss the point, Tom!" I exclaimed. "But what's the use!"

Yet it might not be too late. The revealing letter, too, was a hypodermic. It would keep you pushing on for the lost explorer. You were on the right track! The letter gave you new inspiration. No dangers of the jungle which lay ahead could bother you any more. All your doubts were gone in a flash.

"I am going into *our* country, Tom," Fawcett wrote. "But don't follow me, ever. If I fail to return in five years, it will be too late. Greetings, my friend, and God bless you.

Fawcett."

This was the last paragraph of the vital note. Old Tom's sweat from exertions over his gold pans and labors with pick and shovel in likely shale had obliterated the salutation, washed away the first long sentence.

"That was just a lot of polite stuff," Tom explained, "I remember it. Didn't mean anything. Just hoped my health was good and things like that."

"Tom, were you ever in the Xingu country of Brazil with Fawcett?"

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"Naw."

"Then 'our' country must mean Bolivia?"

"'Our' country, Fawcett's and mine, always was in Bolivia," Tom replied. "I told you all along we were heading in the right direction. Hold your horses, kid, and you'll see I'm right. You'll find your man north of Iximás, in Bolivia. Fawcett talked about the Xingu only to throw the people off."

All your old confidence in your search, sometimes worn thin by confusion and racing, mad experiences on the trail, now was restored.

Other evidence now was remembered to fortify your faith. Another letter Fawcett wrote to an official in Cuyabá before he dropped out of sight from Cuyabá tied in perfectly with the information on the sweat-yellowed sheet of paper Tom had produced from his shirt. That was written in 1925 to an official in Rio; in it the explorer admitted that he was purposely being "vague" about his destination to prevent tragedy befalling any who might decide to follow him.

For any so foolhardy, Fawcett in this communication, promised "certain catastrophe."

But now I had inside dope. Had Fawcett's hint to Tom revealed in his reference to "our country" been deliberate? Soon we'd know.

Hold on, Fawcett, we'll be there!

26.

Diento Negro

ILLIACIA'S LITTLE VILLAGE SNUGGLED INTIMATELY ON the side of a hill overlooking the tumultuous Rio Chuniari which is one of ten thousand "wet fingers" feeding the thirsty Beni to the east.

To locate Teeka on a map scaled 1:2,000,000, measure off about nine inches in a straight line north-northeast of La Paz. This would be, roughly, 300 miles from the capital and the same distance southeast of the Rio Madidi, which defines the border of the mysterious Territorio Colonias del Nordeste.

Teeka is only a stone's throw from the Rio Beni, on its western slope, 310 miles east of the River Heath, and 1,100 miles due west of the Rio Itenes of the Matto Grosso. It is a pin point, if it is there at all, on the biggest map, and nonexistent on those of small scale. The most painstaking cartographer would ignore Teeka entirely were it not for the fact that a village of even ten persons looms so importantly in jungleland, where villages of 100 boil-plagued aboriginals are often indicated in type as big as that which is reserved for La Paz itself.

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Some of the tiniest streams on your Mercator's projection will be shown disproportionately large. All of these little rivers find modest beginnings in tiny springs bubbling out of shy, unlikely places in the forests and the glades. They start with an apologetic trickle and then soon feel their power and grow into roaring important tributaries.

The part of the Chuniari which plunged past Illiacia's village was conscious of itself. Here it was a full-grown artery rushing with authority, deep and swift. Alligators sunned and laid their eggs in rotting weeds on its banks. Within its angry bosom swam big fishes and schools of tiny voracious cannibal piranhas and sting-rays.

To its banks, at night, crept the black panther, the jaguar, the large puma and the small, the patterned tiger and the honey-sucking gato. Packs of wild dogs, resembling wolves, in troops of a dozen snarling killers, visited the Chuniari to drink their fill or to hunt the giant tortuga.

In great trees fringing its banks, howler monkeys somersaulted everlastingly and raced the echoes of their babble into the heights of lazy Chonta palms. Acres of waving shoulder-high Beni nut grass beginning on its western bank gave haven to billions of unseen residents which chirped unendingly the evidence of a population numbered in astronomical figures.

The hill which sheltered the village from eastern rain winds had a gradual rise, which suddenly was interrupted by a neat little plateau, smaller than an acre in size. This was a place the villagers kept spick and span,

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swept clean, free from undergrowth. The plateau was a sort of an open-air powwow house, where the inhabitants met for dancing, for worshipping their pagan star gods, for an oppi ceremony. Here Illiacia and her kin brewed curare or gathered for a feast of monkey stew or boiled the pungent eggs of a crocodile. Here was the jungle's bowling green, the picnic grounds, the temple of the wilderness. Here was Town Hall under the Equator. And often it was Lovers' Lane.

It was on this communal ground one morning, when the dew was new and sweet, that I met Illiacia for the first time since her retirement. The naked rippling girl ran toward me with embarrassing enthusiasm.

The night before, little Sita, Illiacia's nine-year-old cousin, had pressed her face against my mosquito net as I lay half asleep upon the cot. She had brought a message from the convalescing girl. Giggling self-consciously, Sita, acting herself like a love-struck child in grammar school and mightily impressed in her role as Cupid, gave directions for the morrow.

"When the madrigal sings," she said, "when the spiderwebs are wet with dew, Illiacia will be waiting upon the high ground."

Deliriously, almost, Sita chanted this three or four times, without variation, as though she had sat long hours with her cousin in the remote isolation hut memorizing the directions.

The madrigal sings in the morning and the spiderwebs in the jungle are embroidered with dew only for those moments before the direct rays of the sun dry the

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skein. The high ground was the plateau. I had a date at dawn.

For sixteen days Illiacia, nursed by Sita and her lissom sister, Ilta, had resided as a patient in one of the houses of straw a league away from the village where all women after the appearance of certain manifestations retire for five days each month. Illiacia's residence in this tribal stockade had, of necessity, been of longer duration because of the draught of green goo she drank to escape the penalty of her sin.

Other messages Illiacia had sent me from her hut by Ilta, bulletins from the "hospital" to the white Callaguaya. Each night one of the girls stole to my cot and whispered, "Better now," or "Soon," or "Not long." To the point they were, and promising communiqués which hinted volumes of impatience over the delay.

When finally the emerald bullet had justified its great reputation, there was a ripple of excitement in the village. Relief suddenly shone in the faces of all of the people. Everywhere I walked now the nude women smiled at me. The suspense was over.

The message Ilta brought that night to my bed was a triumphant "Now!" That was all. In her enthusiasm she let her hand slip under the mosquito net and pressed my shoulder reassuringly.

While this was going on, I had learned a hundred words or more of the tribe's colorful dialect, which is close to poetry, imagery which calls upon familiar and beautiful things in the sky, the fruit on the trees, the sun's patterns at twilight, the soft pad of the tigre and

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the behavior of the stars—a simple tongue, a language of allegory and symbolism, which you speak not with your mouth but with your heart. It is a dialect born of tender emotions, gentle faith. And during the sixteen days Illiacia was isolated I met her people, over four hundred members of the tribe, including five new babies born since our arrival.

Tom and I rested, walked together, philosophized and quarreled, changed the tethering places of our little macho daily where he could have the most succulent grass of the bountiful land. The sores on his back healed rapidly. His coat of hair developed a healthy sheen. After a week the faithful little fellow was himself again, ready for a thousand miles anywhere. The men of the village never resented our presence by any action or expression. There were more women than men in the tribe by a good two dozen, and our reception by the warriors approached what seem restrained gratitude.

Altogether, this village, which Fawcett on one of his visits to the same spot in 1914, had named "Paradiso de los Ratons" (Paradise of Rats), was a pleasant enough place, cozy and snug there on the side of the hill. Here in Teeka the mosquitoes were not too bad, the moscos arrived only intermittently, and malaria and other fevers were rare. None of the men or women had goiters.

But according to Tom, they had a worse disease or plague—call it what you will. They venerated the rat. While we waited for Illiacia to get well, Tom told me many stories about this remote speck on the globe, but

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excelled in his description of his first visit to Teeka with Fawcett more than twenty years before.

"We had heard about this rat-lovin' tribe for years," he said, "but like so many other jungle stories I didn't believe any part of it. But Fawcett did, and he was right. Long before we got here we saw evidence of the critters on the trail.

"Fawcett was always a bookish fellow. He even talked like a book. 'Great events cast their shadows, y'know,' he said.

" 'Don't be funny,' I told him. 'Those ain't shadows. Those things are rats' skeletons strung on the limb of a water oak.'

" 'That's quite a trinket, all right,' Fawcett said."

Tom declared a light breeze at that moment stirred the limbs, and the weather-beaten carcasses vibrated disgustingly. They made music like the high notes of a xylophone. A score of fat field rats raced before them across the trail, frightened or enraged by the presence of the travelers.

"Those people had been pampering their rats for generations," Tom said. "The rats were so spoiled, they had practically made slaves of the Indians of Teeka.

"As we neared here we saw more and more rats. Some of them wouldn't even take the trouble to get out of our way. They were thicker than flies as we approached the village.

" 'If this keeps up,' Fawcett said, 'we'll have to wade knee-deep through the damned things.'

"They were scaly, ravenous bastards," Tom said, "al-

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ways squealing, begging. And the natives meekly put up with them. The rats invaded the houses and the beds of the people, bit their children, stole their corn."

Generations of coddling made them cocksure and insolent. They took advantage everywhere.

"But why?" I asked Tom.

"It all goes back to an old Indian legend and a big rat they called 'Diente Negro,' or 'Black Tooth.' It seems this 'hero' gnawed the thongs from a Chieftain's legs and arms after he had been captured by an enemy tribe, and enabled him to escape back to the land of his own people. From that time on, he gave orders that no one would ever be allowed to kill a rat.

"There were so many when we got here we stayed only one night. That was enough for both of us."

"But I haven't seen any rats in Teeka," I said, looking at Tom suspiciously. "Where did they go? Did the Pied Piper of Hamelin come along? Or what?"

"A lot of things can happen in twenty years," Tom said. "Maybe I sprinkled a little arsenic around, or the Indians got wise to themselves."

"Tom," I charged, "you're the biggest liar I ever met."

Tom didn't reply to that one. He was reasonable at times.

But maybe he didn't put up an argument because there was a basis of truth to his story. In any case, it is a fact that Fawcett *did* name the village "Paraiso de los Ratos."

Illiacia and Ilta and every other person in the village

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old enough to talk will bear the prospector out on this any time. There's not a living soul in Teeka who does not believe that once upon a time rats ruled their lives. They had disappeared a hundred years before as suddenly as they came.

Later Tom defended his own interpretation of the legend.

"Hell," he said. "I just brought the story up to date."

"King Rat!" There may be something to it. Didn't you shudder when first you saw Illiacia fingering a necklace of rodents' teeth? Similar ornaments adorned the ankles of Ilta, and the longest rat's tooth you ever saw pierced the nose of Chief Utu. You learn that it's a symbol of authority.

27.

Teeka

THE MOSOTENES WHO LIVED IN TEEKA WERE NOT LIKE the stupid and primitive savages of Bolivia who inhabited the wild Chaco. These tribes, the Toba, Lengua, Sanapana, Toothli, Chamacoco, Chunapi and Piflaga resided indolently in homes of boughs crudely thrown against rough framework of sticks. They had no traditions, existed principally in filth and were fired by no deep emotions. But the Mosotenes of Teeka! Here was a spiritual people, a people of high order, hampered little by morals, uninhibited by narrow, restricting codes. These people had in their vocabulary no word for "hypocrisy." In Teeka the approach to all things was forthright. Sex was treated like hunger. Illegitimacy was frequently considered inconvenient, but it connoted nothing of shame. The Scarlet Letter was not in the Mosotene alphabet.

The straw-thatched houses of the Mosotenes were tightly built. Pride of neatness was evinced on every side. The food the people ate was carefully prepared, full of flavor. The entrails of goats and cats were always

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carefully cleaned before they found their way into a howler-monkey stew, and flies were shooed away faithfully from cooking pots. Fresh monkey meat and fish were never exposed to insect life. Wet banana leaves protected food wherever it was laid out.

Cleanliness and other characteristics, such as respect for traditions, even though one of them was an almost reverential belief in "King Rat," set them apart and made of them a superior people, proud, unconscious of it, and kind because of an innate compulsion of which they were wholly unaware.

Yes, they were damned nice people in a pleasant land. Incestuous mixtures had yet to make them jumpy.

The marriage of a brother and a sister had actually produced a genius at one time in the history of the little tribe. This man, as legendary as "King Rat," meant something as real to his descendants as the faith of Israel in Moses. He was a Thomas Jefferson of the savage empires, the founder of savage Democracy, and he may easily have antedated the Greeks. Old Chief Scangii, who lived in a house of skulls. He was a "dead man" all of his life.

Illiacia, who could close her eyes and see him and pray to him as passionately as to the soul of the honeysuckle which held sway over the boundaries of her animist faith, told me about him.

Once upon a time a wayfarer from afar came through Teeka. He had never seen such a house as that in which Chief Scangii lived. He was hospitably invited in, and promptly voiced astonishment at his surroundings.

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The ceiling of the house was made entirely of skulls, the side walls of human leg bones.

"Don't be alarmed," Chief Scangii said. "There is a reason for this, my residence. Living so close to death—with death, in fact—makes one a better man. And also a better Chief.

"For a thousand years our Chieftains have lived in this house, in the center of ever-present death. Our wise forbears decided it would give us pause. It also makes for Teeka."

Teeka, you learn, is a word you can loosely define as Democracy.

"I am Chief of the people, for better or worse. My whims are law, Mr. Wayfarer. My eccentricities are law. I could abuse the people, Mr. Wayfarer. But evermore the skulls of humanity stare down upon me, the very air I breathe wafts through the bones of my departed kin.

"Do you not believe my ancestors were wise to use death itself as a brake on power lust? How can a Chief be petty or cruel and live in this house? Every moment of the day and night he contemplates his future, in his mind's eye he places his own skull with the grinning company overhead, he fixes his own ribs in the window casing.

"The result is that I am a good and tolerant Chief. The reminder of temporal things is always at hand. This house is the guarantee of my people's freedom.

"I must always be a living dead man, because dead men have nothing to lose and nothing to gain. They

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have no ambition. Earthly goods mean nothing any more.

"Therefore I am a dead man, and so my people get justice. There is no true justice possible when an absolute ruler has ambition. If all statesmen and judges were dead in the sense that I no longer live, there could be no wrong in any land.

"And my people know they have another check on my behavior. As long as I remain here I must be a good Chief. The people are the landlords of my house of skulls. I have to be—else my lease would be broken."

That's the way you have to translate the story of the living Chief who was always dead. The house of skulls had long since disappeared, but its influence still remained a power in the political and social economy of the red men.

"They may be simple, all right," Tom observed one day as Illiacia solemnly recited this ancient legend, "but they are not dumb. Not with a code like that."

"They've hit on a basic truth."

Tom said, "It's just another way of saying that a politician can't be honest."

He rubbed his chin speculatively for a moment. "Maybe this sort of thing would work back in the States," he said.

"Not a bad idea," I agreed. "But it would be rather difficult to put all the politicians in a graveyard."

"It might be difficult," said Tom, "but that's where most of them belong."

28.

The Hunter

ILLIACIA WAS THE COLOR OF TEA WITH LEMON. THE SUN did sensational things to her naked body which broke the rays like a busy heliograph, sending them darting from the burnished mirrors of her flesh in sharp flashes of light. These startling reflections kept a persistent halo about her, a series of coppery refractions dazzlingly playing over every rippling inch of her.

When the madrigal sang its first note to announce our rendezvous, the sun rang nature's gong punctually and spattered her with light. She ran toward me with happy and hilarious abandon.

You can't dream about a girl for sixteen days and nights in the jungle and not conjure up a picture of what will happen when you meet her again. Everything was all set in your mind. You would have preferred the reunion under the stars, but in the very early dawn the village was still asleep and on the high ground of the plateau there was privacy enough for anything.

"Hi! Illiacia!"

"Hi! White Callaguaya!"

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Her voice rang with enthusiasm. She was beautiful! She was worth waiting for, all right. Sixteen days or sixteen years. All that mattered was that you saw her again.

Illiacia stopped just inches out of arm's reach. We stood almost in the center of the plateau.

"I have thought about you, great Callaguaya, night and day, all the time, when the wild sun roars over the skies and the quiet moon soothes the earth at night."

Good going, Illiacia! That's what you wanted to hear. It was all working out according to plan.

"And," she continued, "I dreamed of you, that I could count upon you."

You bet you can, Illiacia!

"You are beautiful," I said, by way of beginning.

"I dreamed that I could count upon you, great White Callaguaya."

If this was preliminary ritual to jungle love, it didn't fit particularly well with my impatience.

"I must ask of you a favor, great White Callaguaya."

"Sure, sure, Illiacia. When?"

"Now, great White Callaguaya. There is not much time!"

"All right, all right! What's stopping it?"

"I must have some more of your green power?"

Wow! The emerald bullet!

"But you have had your dose. It has performed the miracle."

"It is not for me, Great White Callaguaya. It is for Ilta."

"Ilta?"

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"Yes, and a drop or two for Sita. It will not take much for her. She is such a little girl."

"Nine-year-old Sita, too?"

"You are the only one who can help them, Great White Callaguaya."

Your pride was hurt. You didn't like this a bit! It wasn't what you expected at all.

"As for my dreams, Great White Callaguaya, they always come true. I know you will spare a little of the green power. Sita is such a little girl. It would be a pity. Her lover should have waited for a year."

"Who was he?"

"A tall bearded warrior from the Rio Enedere. He was Copiari. He walked into Teeka all alone."

"And who was Ilta's lover?"

"Oh," she said, "the same. He was Copiari, too."

"I can spare a couple of drops for the girls, I guess."

"Thank you, Great White Callaguaya. As I said, my dreams always come true. And you can give me a drop, also, for my aunt, Cotaë? She's the great picker of sweet bananas?"

"And who was her lover, Illiacia?"

"The same, Great White Callaguaya, the handsome bearded warrior and hunter from the rapid river Enedere."

"And yours, Illiacia? Who was he?"

"Ah," she said, "he was the same. He was Copiari. He is a great hunter."

You are damned well right, he is, Illiacia. What a man!

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I reached into my pocket and handed her the little gold mine, the bottle of the goo which makes jungle girls smile again, the stuff which wipes away the frowns of maidens who live in the bush and love there—and too well. I handed her the stuff that dreams are made of, at least her dreams. I do this because I am a mushy fool, and I know it. That helps, anyway. Okay, sucker, toss away a mint. To hell with the gals in Conyers, and East Orange and Kansas City.

But save a little, Illiacia, just a drop or two. Enough for an analysis back in New York.

“Are there any other girls, Illiacia?”

“None who need the green power, Great White Callaguaya.”

What a man was Copiari!

Illiacia bubbled her gratitude as she grasped the bottle. It was wild singsong stuff, and most of it I could not understand. But she was sincere. It was the sincerity of a twelve-year-old child. This formality was over in a minute, and then she ran fast down the side of the plateau to awaken from their troubled sleep little Sita, the graceful Ilta, the presumably sensuous Aunt Cotae.

“Return that which is left,” I cried.

“Aye,” promised Illiacia over her shoulder.

As the Indian girl disappeared, the deflation of the Great White Callaguaya was complete.

Jungle "Soup"

MY GIFTS TO ILLIACIA MAY NOT HAVE WON HER LOVE, but they gave me a hold on her nevertheless. The emerald bullet at least would reveal for me the secrets of curare. Illiacia did not fail me there.

Curare has been overdramatized for five centuries. But writers of modern thrillers, however lurid and bizarre their work may be, have yet a long way to go to equal the amazing description of curare and its effects on luckless victims penned several hundred years ago by the gallant Sir Walter Raleigh for his Queen. No man ever contributed more to the unsavory reputation of the poison than this highly imaginative Englishman who sailed up the Amazon on his voyage of exploration.

Here's what this sixteenth-century soldier, adventurer, navigator and author had to say about the extract of *strychnos toxifera*:

"The Arosas Indians, black as Negroes, a very valiant and desperate people, have the most strong poison on their arrows, and most dangerous to all nations; of which poison I shall speak somewhat, being a digression not unnecessary.

"There was nothing of which I am more curious than

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to find out the true remedies of these poisoned arrows, for beside the mortality of the wound they make, the party shot endureth the most insufferable torments in the world and abideth a most ugly and lamentable death, sometimes dying stark mad; sometimes their bowels break out of their bellies which are presently discolored as black as pitch and so unsavory that no man can endure to cure or to attend them.

“And it is more strange to know that in all this time there was never Spaniard, either by gifts or torment that could obtain to the true knowledge of the cure, although they have martyred and put to torture I know not how many of them [the Indians].

“But every one of these Indians knows it not; no, not one among thousands. Their soothsayers, who do, conceal it and only teach it from the father to the son.”

Nice going, Sir Walter, but all wrong. It's too bad you didn't have Illiacia on your voyage up the Amazon. She would have shown you a thing or two, as she did me. Yes, the daughters of the Indians know about curare, and so do the wives, and the hags and the crones and the little boys and the little girls. Curare to the jungle Indian of Bolivia is just about as mysterious as a hoe cake, or corn pone, to a rural Georgia dorky.

And the antidote for it? Well, in the jungle, there's only one, and that's the famous “monkey” antidote. “Pull it out, suck it out, don't let it stay.” And even this won't work if too much gets under the skin. Which shows that all of the Indians in Brazil could have been “martyred” by the Spaniards, tortured cruelly until all

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of them were wiped out on the shores of the Amazon, without being able to reveal a "remedy."

Not that there are not certain precautions to take, and a few possible, though doubtful, aids to recovery if the dose is not too large and too long under the skin. If too much of the blood poisoning has not filtered into your veins from a blowgun barb, a little whiskey will help in restoring you to normal, and sometimes artificial respiration is of assistance. A few intravenous injections of $C_6H_{12}O_6$, which is glucose, mixed with an alkali, *could* work in saving the life of a curare poison victim, but it's risky business at best. Astringents like alum or tannin would, theoretically, help under *ideal* conditions.

That is what, in effect, modern science says. But the monkey knows what's best in the jungle. And what's good for a monkey is good for a man.

If you have too much curare barbed into your flesh nothing much will help, anyway. So "pull it out, suck it out, don't let it stay." You might be lucky. There's always the chance the dose aimed your way is too weak a dose to be lethal.

My experiments with curare were never intended to prove anything especially profound. They were inspired by a story written years ago by some forgotten but excellent author who did a good job of killing off a central figure in his yarn with the device of a tiny wooden spike, curare-dipped, set into his shoe by a murderous cobbler. When the victim put on his shoe again the wooden spike pierced his little toe and a second or two later he was dead.

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The howls of the anti-vivisectionist society over the use of curare in the vivisection of dogs as far back as 1897 in England also provoked my interest. These society members charged that dogs treated with curare before being operated on by surgeons were never unconscious. Their charge alleged they were merely "made still" physically by the drug, so they couldn't kick and bite and protest, but actually suffered all the pain because their brain functions were not affected by the injection. The Victoria Street and International Society for the Protection of Animals from Vivisection issued a quaint little pamphlet, one of the "Rainbow Series," more than half a century ago in London under the sub-head, "Being Replies to What My Doctor Tells Me about Curare." Here is part of it:

"Curare (called urara and woorali) is the aqueous extract of a tree—the *strychnos toxifera*—growing in Spanish Guiana and North Brazil. The extract is thickened for use with mucilaginous matter and was formerly employed by the Indians to poison their arrows. Its property is to cause, when introduced through a wound or by inoculation into the blood, a complete paralysis of all the nerves of motion; and by this means it caused death to all those struck by the Indians' arrows, as it prevented them from breathing. It does not cause paralysis if swallowed in moderate quantities; and animals which have been killed by means of weapons tipped with it may be eaten with impunity.

"By an ingenious contrivance modern physiologists have found how to avail themselves of the paralyzing

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property of this drug to keep the animals which they desire to vivisect absolutely motionless, without allowing them to die by losing the power to breathe. They keep a hole in the windpipe, and through that pipe they slowly and regularly pump air into the lungs in imitation of nature's breathing. The machines for doing this steadily and for many hours together are worked in large laboratories by steam water or electricity.

"There is one in the great laboratories at Leipzig which never ceases pumping day or night, keeping up artificial respiration in the vivisected animals which lie bound on their tables.

"But the peculiarity of curare is that while it thus completely paralyzes the nerves of motion, so that the curarized man or animal cannot stir a finger, or moan, or even breathe, it does not deaden the nerves of sensation.

"Or if it does affect them, it is to render them more, rather than less, alive to pain. This terrible fact has been ascertained and avowed by the greatest physiologists.

"Dr. Haggan acutely remarked, 'If there be anything reliable in the results of experimental physiology, it is the ingeniously ascertained effects of curare,' and said that if these could now be contraverted it would only show that vivisection can absolutely prove nothing whatever.

"There have been many instances of men undergoing curarization and afterwards testifying to its effects on themselves, *e.g.*:

"Dr. Jousset (de Bellesme) (*Bulletin General Thera-*

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peutique, 1865, p. 404) gives a description of a case where an overdose had been given to a patient by Lionville, and artificial respiration had to be kept up until he recovered. The patient then related 'all he had felt, the preservation of his intelligence, the annihilation of all power of movement, of which he gave a clear account. . . .'

"Claude Bernard says (*Revue Scientifique*, 1874, p. 1, 117):

" 'We have the account of individuals who have been inoculated with curare but to a degree which had not stopped the motions of respiration and consequently permitted the individual to return to movement. These have been able to relate that during their paralysis they had nevertheless been fully conscious of their existence and of all the impressions on their senses.'

"Vulpian, a physiologist whose authority is only second to Claude Bernard's, gives as his definite conclusion in his *Leçons sur l'Appareil Vaso Moteur* (Paris, 1875) Vol. II, pp. 660 and 661:

" 'Curare does not act on the sensory nerves, or at least does not abolish their functions.

" 'The experiments of Bernard Kolliker, myself, and others have put this fact beyond doubt. . . . Curare which abolishes voluntary motion in no way annuls sensation; at least in ordinary doses.'

"There is also an English case:

"Professor Garngie, before the Royal Commission, said that he had performed some experiments with curare on children, and that in consequence he 'was able to determine very decidedly that sensibility was not at all

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impaired; although there was a certain amount of paralysis of motion produced by the curare there was no affection of the sensory nerves and this observation I was able to confirm by others on another little patient.' (Minutes Q. 5, 407.)

"And here, finally, is the conclusion of Claude Bernard, 'Prince of Physiologists,' to be found in his celebrated article in the *Revue des Deux Mondes*, for September, 1864:

" 'Thus all their descriptions offer us a pleasant and tranquil picture of death by curare. A gentle sleep seems to occupy the transition from life to death. But it is nothing of the sort; the external appearances are deceitful. If, in fact, we pursue the essential part of our subject by means of experiments into the organic analysis of vital extinction we discover that this death which appears to steal on in so gentle a manner and so exempt from pain, is, on the contrary, accompanied by the most atrocious suffering that the imagination of man can conceive (*les souffrances les plus atroces que l'imagination de l'homme puisse concevoir*). (P. 170.)

" 'In this motionless body behind that glazing eye and with all the appearance of death, sensitiveness and intelligence persist in their entirety. The corpse before us hears and distinguishes all that is done around it. It suffers when pinched or irritated; in a word, it has consciousness and volition, but it has lost the instruments which serve them.' "

That all this is in large part nonsense, I was destined to prove for myself. I was to be both the vivisectionist

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and the vivisectionist's dog as well. And it was to be lucky for me that Tom was handy. I found out a lot—but that was later.

Curare is just about as deadly as any other lethal poison. A little might even be good for you, just like arsenic. A curare cocktail, a drop or two mixed with yucca rum, which the natives call *massoto*, mixed with a dash of pineapple juice and "chased" with a fried plantain, can settle an upset stomach as fast as anything. If you don't stop to remember that *massoto* is made from yuccas chewed up by toothless old women and spit into earthen pots to ferment, the drink is not at all unpalatable.

Down on the banks of the Chuniari River where Illiacia often sat for hours killing alligators with her blow-gun and knocking off an occasional howler monkey for good measure, I one day asked her to let me in on the "mysteries" of curare.

"I have been good to you, Illiacia," I said.

"Yes, Great White Callaguaya, you have."

"I want you to do me a favor, Illiacia."

"Name it, Great White Callaguaya. Sita now is one again, Ilta also is one, and Aunt Cotae too is single. You have done this for us. Name it, Great White Callaguaya."

"I want you to show me how to make a batch of curare."

The Indian girl seemed surprised. She wrinkled her brow, stared fixedly at me for a moment or two.

"The Great White Callaguaya wishes to laugh," she

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said, finally. "The Great White Callaguaya asks for nothing at all."

Curare, nothing at all!

"If you are serious," she said, after a moment, "you ask little of me. You could have asked more."

"It means a lot to me," I said. "Curare, the deadly poison, the mystery alkaloid of the jungle of South America."

There was silence for a moment.

"To make curare," said Illiacia finally, in an extremely uninterested voice, "is like making soup. You put into the pot the vegetables and you boil them for soup. You put into the pot the flowers of the evil plant and you boil them for curare."

Just like making soup! What had the detective story writers been shouting about? And, as I recalled my previous studies, Job and Homer and Claudius, and Virgil and Hakluyt, and the historians who ascribed its use to the Celts and the Gauls and the Dacians and the Dalmatians.

Homer's *Odyssey* (I. 260) contributes this observation:

"For thither, too, went Odysseus in his swift ships in search of a deadly drug, that he might have wherewith to smear his bronze-tipped arrows, yet Illus gave it not to him, for he stood in awe of the gods that are forever; but my father gave it, for he held him strangely dear."

Virgil, in *Aeneid* (IX. 772) furnishes another reference:

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“Amycus next hath bled, slayer of wildwood hearts; was more cunning to deal with the poison that smears the shaft and to tip with death the steel.”

Job (VI. 4) may have been thinking of curare, although this admittedly may be far-fetched, when he wrote:

“For the arrows of the Almighty are within me, the poison whereof drinketh up my spirits; the terrors of God do set themselves in array against me.”

“Tomorrow,” said Illiacia, “meet me by the Chuniari, and I will make curare. There is nothing mysterious about soup.”

Great White Sucker

EARLY THE NEXT DAY I MET ILLIACIA DOWN ON THE river bank where, hour on end, we had watched the devil flies dart and the alligators slither and the sting rays bank in the air like crazy stunters looping in shiny monoplanes. Tom was there, too.

"Hi, Great White Sucker!" he greeted me.

"Hi, Tom! I'm sorry I had to give the girls the emerald bullet. But Illiacia said she would save a drop."

"You've spilled a liquid gold mine," the old man said quietly. "I can't figure you out. The bottom of the bottle is not even damp."

"She promised to save just a little sample," I protested.

Tom gabbled at Illiacia in her dialect. Her answer came back like wild honey.

"Yes," she said, "I did promise the Great White Calaguaya, but I could save none at all. It was a miracle, like the miracle of birth and death. Sita, the small child, I thought, would require only a little. Alas, her body was thirsty. She gulped the green power. She must have

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needed as much as she took, else she would not have drawn it within her. And with such relish, too. But, as I have told you, now all who drank of it are one."

"You can't get around these people," Tom growled disgustedly. "I don't blame Illiacia, either. It's you. Half of that stuff was mine."

"Tom, I'll make it up to you, somehow. I'll go to Munecas, see Musa, get more."

"They'd eat you, if you did, you'd better stay away from Munecas."

Illiacia stretched out on the wet sand where it was fresh and cool. She held her nine-foot blowgun straight into the air, sighting down its trim length critically. After a moment or two she mumbled into the mouth-piece, which echoed her words hollowly:

"The green power was of greater use in the bellies of Sita and Ilta and Aunt Copae than in the bottle, idle, under the clothes of the Great White Callaguaya."

"You see," Tom said with sad resignation, "you just can't get around these people. But I'm sorry we lost the girl medicine. I'd thought all along I might retire on my half of the profits."

"Maybe you can retire yet, Tom. There's a green hedge I know on the sand dunes of Easthampton, Long Island. It's forty feet long. We'll go back there, you and I, and dig it up and plant it on our own land, thousands of acres, and sell it all over the world."

"Hedges won't make us rich."

"This one will, Tom. Its roots came from Bolivia, and once upon a time an adventurous maiden discovered that

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its leaves produce a powerful tea. If it's half as efficacious as that lucky lady claimed—and I hear she subsequently had friends who experimented successfully—it's as good as the emerald bullet, any day."

"Well, we'll see," Tom said.

That was the way the loss of a gold mine was dismissed out in the jungle of Bolivia. Tom accepted it with the calm of a Rockefeller seeing Radio City burn down. We never talked about it any more after Tom wound up the subject with one final observation:

"I'm not going to hold it against you now, or ever. Illiacia is a good-looking girl and if I'd a-been younger I might have done the same, except I like mine a good healthy half-breed color, dark-white, like Chita."

Illiacia, possibly sensing the argument that might have ensued, gave a sudden, whispered warning for silence and sprang to her feet as fast as the flash of an anteater's tongue. In a moment we were to see a demonstration of blowgun accuracy which white men find almost incredible.

She dipped a barb into a container of curare hanging from a vine around her neck, inserted it into her blowgun, placed it firmly against her lips, filled her cheeks with air, and took careful aim.

The barb, too swift for the eye to follow, shot from the long gun with barely an audible hiss. Tom pointed excitedly to the other bank of the river, fifty yards away. There was a terrific commotion in the rushes. A gigantic crocodile reared twenty feet into the air in an astonished spasm.

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Illiacia grinned. "I aim for the eyes of the beasts," she said. "The barbs bounce off their thick hides."

Tom patted Illiacia admiringly on her shoulder.

"It was a pin-point aim," he said. "Those croc's have eyes the size of beans. And say, did you ever think of it? That barb she puffed made no more noise than dandruff falling on a newspaper."

Illiacia was proud of the compliment. "It was the sun," she said. "The sun helped me."

Illiacia and her people were forever conscious of the sun, amazed by it, impressed by its power, awed by the miracle of it.

And what do white men think of it? "Do you not wonder," asked Illiacia, "how it can last so long?"

"You mean that Bolivian stove?" queried Tom. "Sure, it's been in business a long time. But it's got a good fireman. God don't get tired, girl. He knows how to stoke the fire."

"Aye," said Illiacia thoughtfully, "God does feed the sun. That's it!"

"Yep," agreed Tom, "you can't burn out God."

This was my curare day. I was impatient for the cooking to begin. Illiacia said:

"Ilta, Sita, Aunt Copae are in the forests and the fields gathering the evil plant. When they return with enough, you will have your soup."

"Today?"

"Today," she promised, "up on the high ground which shelters my village of Teeka from the eastern rain winds."

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There I will make it for you, Great White Callaguaya."

"It's all a lot of foolishness," Tom said. "That stuff! There's nothing to it."

"Well, I want to see for myself," I said sourly, and was glad when he left to help half a dozen Indian boys recover the crocodile from the Chunari. Later they would skin the beast and save enough of its flesh to jerk, and the teeth for ornaments.

Illiacia and I sat in our favored spot. It was there that I had taught her the English alphabet. Her slate was the white sand of the beach, wet sand, washed and cleaned and crushed by the rapids plunging for untold eons upon the rocks. Little eddies every hour threw new deposits up on the bank out of reach of the torrent. This was Illiacia's "eraser." Her pencil was her finger. My ruler was a trimmed branch from a chonta palm.

The girl wrote awkward A's, and exulted over her kindergarten mastery of "cat." She was serious with wrinkled brow and pleased no end when she understood its relation to the honey-sucking gato and the tigre and the fat pet in her house, now quite old and destined soon to make a feast for her family. She pronounced her letters hollowly, as a deaf mute might who had never before heard a sound.

Illiacia triumphed over Y and Z, and learned to pronounce "darling." The meaning of the word was emphasized with due professorial license demonstrated with such restraint as gave, to her satisfaction and mine, thrilling promises of things to come.

THUNDER BEATS THE DRUM!

Each new English word she learned spurred the girl to greater efforts. When I prospected down the river, Tom, too, taught her.

She liked to surprise me. One day when I returned from a gold-washing hike on a little tributary of the Chunari, Illiacia confronted me with a mischievous glint in her eye. Tom sat with her in our peaceful "classroom."

"I know new English," she boasted.

"Good stuff, Illiacia, let's hear it."

"Yu ere e sawn ave beech," she said, simply.

She got this out laboriously, but proudly, then stood back shyly, awaiting the expected compliment. I looked at her sternly.

"What is wrong, Great White Callaguaya?" she asked.

"Where did you learn this?" I demanded with mock piety.

"Thy white-bearded father taught me."

"Get this straight, Illiacia, Tom's not my father, and he's been playing a joke. You've said bad words."

For a moment the girl seemed crushed. But only for a moment. She recovered her native poise miraculously and looked me straight in the eye.

"Bad words?" she demanded. "Do you have bad words in your language? We have none in ours."

"I guess that will hold you for a while," commented Tom, and he was right. You just couldn't "get around those people." And you wouldn't change them if you could.

GREAT WHITE SUCKER

When Illiacia and I swam in deep quiet stretches of the river, I stripped only to my shorts. She dived in exactly as she walked upon the land, bare and beautiful and unashamed.

"Why do you wear clothes?" she once demanded.

It's hard to answer a question like that. Try it some time.

"Er—er—" I stuttered, "to keep warm, I guess."

"But," said the Indian girl, "it is always warm in Teeka."

"You just can't get around these people." Tom always hit the nail on the head. You were grateful to him for many little things like that. They helped you escape the searching honesty of the tribe and rescued you, too, from other philosophical pitfalls and allowed you the comfort of respectable, civilized hypocrisy. That's something that mustn't be disturbed, wherever you are.

"Jungle, you can get in my blood, if you must, but damn it, stay out of my hair."

It takes you a minute or two to recover from the shock of Illiacia's question.

The matter of the kiss was upsetting, too. Illiacia laughed delightedly on "curare day" when I made her a gift of a little scarab ring. She clasped my hand impulsively and danced around me in tight little circles and seemed to try to twist my shoulder from the socket. A moment later she pressed her face close to mine, sniffing with her nose at my mouth.

Tom stood by watching amusedly.

"What the hell goes on?" I asked him.

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"She's showing you her gratitude," he said, "she's kissing you."

"If she's kissing me, I'm dreaming."

"Well, then, you are," said the old man. "That's the way they kiss in Teeka. It's the smell kiss. She's smelling your upper lip."

"Why, that's the way the natives kiss in New Guinea!" I exclaimed.

"And the Eskimos rub noses, too," said Tom. "All the same, it's kissing to them. Rubbing noses, smelling upper lips. I say it's still kissing."

"I'll fix that," I promised. "What these people need is education."

Tom discreetly disappeared with his gold pan down the banks of the Chunari. Illiacia and I were alone. This was the time.

"Come here, Illiacia."

She obeyed quietly, sensing something.

I pulled the girl to me suddenly, clasped her body close to mine.

The sun had not yet dried our bodies after the swim. The girl's curling, shoulder-length jet hair now was wet and straight. As I held her she shook it fiercely for a moment like a mane and a warm iridescent spray framed us briefly. In that instant I pressed my lips close upon Illiacia's voluptuous, curling mouth and held them there.

She struggled for a moment, and then, just like the movies, she stood upon her tiptoes, reaching for more. Then she was limp in my arms.

When I released Illiacia a minute, maybe two, later,

GREAT WHITE SUCKER

there was a new color in her face. Illiacia was blushing.

"It is very strange, Great White Callaguaya. And I like it," she said finally, "but tell me, what does it mean?"

Try to explain a thing like that sometime yourself out in Bolivia's wilds, and it will embarrass you.

"What does a kiss mean?" You answer it. I did my best, and demonstrated it once again. Illiacia was delighted.

"I like it. I like it," she said. "I must show this to Copiari, when the handsome bearded warrior walks alone again into Teeka."

I sat down on the wet sand. God, how a man's moods can change!

Old Tom, a peeping Tom this time, had been watching from behind a tree. He came out of his hiding place in a rage.

"You're an idiot," he exclaimed, "to do a thing like that. This will get around everywhere. You'll have everyone in Teeka kissing. Illiacia won't keep this a secret. First thing you know Aunt Cotae will try out the discovery on me, and damn it all, I just don't like to neck with Indians."

To hell with you, Tom, and damn you, Copiari. I'll cut off your beard, you red Lochinvar!

The Jab

LOUD HALLOES FROM TEEKA CALLED US BACK TO THE village. Sita, Ilta and Aunt Copae had returned from their *strychnos toxifera* picking, loaded down with a hundred pounds of the fresh vines. These they deposited on the plateau before a three-gallon earthen pot, around which dry wood had already been piled for the fire.

I remember the hour very well. It was one o'clock, because the sun had dipped just a little to the west to take noon to Ecuador. The royal purple jungle merged with cardinal red and everything in the alarming forest suddenly was washed with grape juice. Sparkling burgundy, winish tints, came unannounced and splashed their hues over the earth and everything which grew upon it. That's the way the jungle behaves once every day.

Illiacia settled down systematically to her work, poured two gallons of clear spring water into the "soup" pot and lighted the mountain of kindling around it. Aunt Cotae, Sita and Ilta chopped up the *strychnos toxifera* plants in tiny sections, spreading them out in little piles as neatly as Japs display the ingredients of *suki-yaki*.

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Tom sat near by smoking a cigarette rolled in a leaf cut from the masthead of a *New York Times*.

As the water boiled, Illiacia scraped the inner bark from some of the tendrils of the plants. This she tossed in first. Other parts of the vines soon followed.

"There," she said, "that is all until the boiling water makes the paste."

Then Sita was dispatched to the village to fetch two ten-foot-long hides of the great tamandua, the anteating bear, the myrmecophaga. Siesta time was overdue. All of us stretched out upon the woolly rugs to sleep. Only Sita stayed awake to tend the fire. We drowsily watched the white smoke from it curl in long ribbons high into the air.

The water in the pot was already turning brown as the contents bubbled ominously like the brew in a witch's cauldron. Sita stirred the sinister porridge now and then, and when a drop splashed on her hand she licked the poison with her tongue. Sampling the soup!

Add some salt, thicken it with flour, maybe? Well, that's about what happened when Sita shook us vigorously out of our slumber and announced that our mess of horror juice was ready.

Illiacia rubbed her sleepy eyes, jumped to her feet, took one critical look into the pot, which now bubbled sullenly, like sticky resin.

It was time to turn it into mucilage. The Indian girl quickly tossed in a handful of leaves, Sita piled new wood on the fire and the mucilaginous stuff churned heavily.

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Twenty minutes later, Illiacia announced:

"Great White Callaguaya, your curare is ready. The poison has been wooed from the evil weed. What is next?"

Next?

Tom squinted at the alkaloid in the earthen vessel.

"Well," he said, "you have seen it made. You've got your damned curare now. What are you going to do with it?"

"Remember the monkey song, Tom? 'Pull it out, suck it out, don't let it stay!'"

"What's that got to do with you?" the old man asked. There was something of alarm in his voice. I can hear it now.

"If it can't kill a monkey, it can't kill me."

"That's straitjacket talk," Tom said. "You're crazy."

"Who gives a damn," I said. "Here goes!"

The stuff was hot and thick. I dipped a barb into it, just a little. Tom watched silently. The feet of the four naked Indian girls were glued to the plateau.

No doubt my experiment could have been accomplished more scientifically in a hospital, but hospitals have only "tamed" curare, called by the trade name "Intocostin."

Once, each week, physicians in the great sprawling Brooklyn State Hospital, where 3,400 persons live in twisted mental shadows, pump the toxic substance into the veins of 180 patients suffering from schizophrenia. In other institutions in New York and in forty scattered

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all over the United States, more than 50,000 mentally deranged men and women have been deliberately "poisoned" with the virulent matter.

A large number of spastic children in hospitals throughout the country, pathetic little victims of convulsions, get shots of Intocostin, and it helps them. Lockjaw patients in the last convulsive stages of tetanus have received injections of the stuff by men advanced in medicine. Sometimes this helps. Some specialists shoot the "poisoned" needles home in the bodies of patients suffering from certain stomach ailments. Intocostin "softens" convulsions in shock therapy.

But don't get the idea that the physicians who wield the hypodermics use curare in its raw state. The 5-cc bottles in their laboratories contain only carefully distilled extracts of the real thing.

Had I attempted the test in a hospital back home, the odds are I would have been stopped before I started. Hospitals usually frown on suicide, and, too, a carefully supervised experiment under the eyes of physicians would have lacked something the jungle offered me. There was primitive drama here in the jungle.

No one stopped me. I jabbed the barb into my right arm and lay down quickly upon the tamandua's hide. The world turned upside down. Tom hurried over to me. I looked up into his eye, the good one. It was suddenly a huge blue mirror. It grew and grew. It was the size of a great New York show window. Within its depths insane patterns danced. The conscience of the

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damned screamed in hell. Things turned over and over. The devil handed me an engraved invitation. I held it up to the sun and saw a Tiffany watermark.

Chief Scangi muttered about democracy, the teeth in Illiacia's necklace jumped back into the mouths of big jungle rats.

I was living in a house of skulls, and it was suddenly dark. Out of a nightmare world came a curious order. Whirling visions of horror suddenly dimmed and, in distorted review, yet with a sort of grotesque precision, all of the stories on which I had worked as a reporter paraded across my subconsciousness. I was myself abstract. This was "you" I was watching. You were there when Ruth Snyder walked down the last mile to the electric chair in Sing Sing. Lowenstein, the banker, leaped from a plane over the English Channel. He fell slowly and bowed politely, knowingly, all the way down. You tried to pick up his body, at Dover, Dunkirk, Nieuport and Calais. Nancy Miller, Maharanee of Indore, ordered you out of her villa at St. Germain en Laye, and her dog ripped the seat of your pants. You are drunk in Harry's New York Bar interviewing Harry K. Thaw. Jack Astor's fantastic nuptials in Newport. "Putzy" Hanfstaengel promising you an interview with Hitler at the Adlon Hotel in Berlin. Krueger struck a match with annoying complacency. "Another one gone," he said. . . .

Henry Ford gives you a scoop at Dearborn and cheers a Model T. Emeralds and diamonds and sapphires, rose quartz, pearls, platinum spiderwebs, the little god of miniature mocking you in his shrine, the \$435,000 Col-

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leen Moore Doll House. F. D. Roosevelt grins at you in Penn Station, invites you aboard his train. He's running for office, the Presidency of the United States. The King of Siam takes out his eye and shows you his cataract. Clarence Chamberlin lands you on a sand dune at Kitty Hawk, North Carolina, and the ghost of a Wright brother beckons to you with a forefinger three feet long. William Jennings Bryan and Billy Sunday sign for a burlesque tour. You'll write this for page one. James Joyce and Gertrude Stein decide to collaborate. The church organ at St. Bartholomew's is playing hillbilly music and Maurice Chevalier sings "Louise" in St. Patrick's choir.

Sacco and Vanzetti burn in Massachusetts. You smell it.

Herbert Hoover, Herrick, Lindbergh, Madame Chiang, the Prince of Wales, Amelia Earhart, Lou Gordon, Wilmer Stultz, Bert Acosta, Jimmy Doolittle, "Hap" Arnold, General Pershing, the Kaiser at Doorn, Al Smith—they were whirling by faster now, all in ballet skirts, coached on a great stage by Aimee Semple McPherson. Krishnamurti played the accompaniment by dancing on a xylophone. My ears rang with the music—louder, louder—and then abruptly a whirring silence. The company faded quickly. They rolled up into a large, buoyant ball of white llama wool, which was succeeded by a tall, sad-faced woman, dressed entirely in black. She came floating toward me out of Brazil. She stood over me with a far-away look in her eyes, which welled with tears. She leaned over and kissed me tenderly. "Thank you, thank you," she said. "I am Nina Fawcett."

She disappeared in a mist as quickly as she came, and

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was replaced by old Tom. I was coming round! The prospector was pumping my chest like an accordion. I was bruised and sore all over. Illiacia's mouth was glued to the spot where the curare barb had pricked my flesh. I looked at it blankly. It was highly inflamed. She had done a good job.

The Indian girl stood up only after I opened my eyes. She was crying now. Tom was cursing.

"You nearly went out for good that time, kid. You're the nuttiest guy I ever met, even nuttier than Fawcett. What the hell did you prove?"

"Nothing, Tom," I said weakly, "nothing at all."

But I had, to my satisfaction, at least, established that curare *does* knock you out, that when curarized, you *don't* know what goes on around you. From almost the instant that I foolishly inoculated myself with the batch of stuff Illiacia brewed, I was unaware of anything which happened on the plateau, of Tom's heroic artificial respiration, of Illiacia's effective sucking of the wound. I had proved, too, to my own satisfaction that Sir Walter Raleigh had pulled his Queen's leg.

What was the use of discussing all this with Tom? I was too upset by Nina Fawcett's vision to think of anything else, anyway. There was a face which would haunt me for all of the days of my life.

"Thank you, thank you," she said. "I am Nina Fawcett."

Tom and I walked back toward the village of Teeka to turn in for the night. The nude Mosotene belles brought up the rear, Sita carrying the heavy anteater

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hides, Illiacia the curare in a gourd, Aunt Cotae the pot and Ilta a blowgun and a sheaf of darts.

It was an odd parade. Everyone seemed unnecessarily quiet as we stumbled down the hill to the huts. Characteristically Tom broke the silence.

"You've wasted a lot of time with curare," he said. "With half the effort we could have had a gallon of oppi."

Oppi still was the thing uppermost in Old Tom's mind, and he was to have himself a "mess of the stuff" sooner than anyone anticipated. Maybe he was right, but still there was a lot of time left for oppi and Fawcett, and for other things, too. I said as much to the prospector.

"For you, there's a lot of time," he said, "but not for me. I'm an old man." He suddenly seemed pathetically tired.

"You'll be old, too, some day," Tom predicted, "and then you'll understand what I mean."

I looked at him sharply. There's just one year in your life when the wrinkles come, or your hair turns gray, or your soul grows up and the impact of age hits you like damnation. It comes as a great surprise. You can't get used to it.

Now it had happened, like a time bomb, to Tom. Only now, for the first time, did he think of himself as an old man. Tom, *muy bravo*, the incredible hombre who walked unarmed with a swinging gait across the skinny backbone of a hemisphere, had not been conscious of his years until he had amassed seventy of them.

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Age had caught up with him at this very moment on the plateau path above Teeka. He was over the hump! There had been no transition. Age, to Tom, like the jungle morning, did not dawn. In his own mind he had, at one moment, been a kid holding a bag of wild oats, and the next there were no more left to sow. Tom was holding an empty bag!

It was cruel as hell, but it was there, and there to stay. And what was Tom going to do about it? If he had been in civilization, he would have tried the remedies suggested by his doctor. Monkey glands, the new hormones. But in the jungle you have no doctor. So what did Tom do? He wrote his own prescription. He prescribed oppi.

"Okay, Tom," I promised, "I'll try to get you oppi. If you live to be a hundred you'll never stop painting your caricature of Dorian Gray."

"I never heard of that guy," said Tom. "I've had my eye on Aunt Cotae and I've already found out that it's going to take oppi to make the grade."

Tupac-Amaru

NEXT DAY WHEN WE BROACHED THE SUBJECT OF TOM'S oppi to Illiacia, the girl looked at us strangely.

"Don't you know," she asked, "that tomorrow begins our 'Great Week'?"

"Great week?" Tom asked, and then snapped his fingers as though the light had dawned. "I forgot. It *is* the 'Great Week.' Oppi and everything else is shelved for seven days. These Teekians are the most patriotic people in the world. I've got my Parnell, the South American white man his Bolivar, you've got your George Washington. The Indians have their Tupac-Amaru. This is his anniversary. This is a 'holy week' for the red man. They'll be having a full week of 'Fourth of Julys,' celebrations and feasts."

Tupac-Amaru, George Washington of the Indians!

My first "introduction" to Tupac-Amaru had come on the great heights of the Andes overlooking Sorata where Tom and I paused for a few minutes with little Chita before plunging downward on our way to Tipuani. It was there that I first heard his name, when I saw

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the location of the cordillera springs. It was a reservoir mighty enough to wipe out the Spanish-held town below, and that was precisely what it did when the Indians released its great cascade to win one of the strangest victories of all warfare's history. This was over 160 years before, way back when the fate of the American Revolution and George Washington's Continental Army hung in the balance of history's scale. White civilization in the vast land from the Isthmus of Panama to Tierra del Fuego was threatened with destruction at the hands of this other patriot—a native Indian, lineal descendant of the great Incas of Peru, in character startlingly similar to our own "Father of his Country."

But nothing could have been farther apart than the final destiny meted out by fate to Washington and his red contemporary—Tupac-Amaru, Marquis of Oropesa, direct heir of the Inca kings, before whose armed might the royal Spanish viceroys in Lima and far-distant Buenos Aires trembled. Washington won his war, went on to the deserved leadership of a great new nation, died in peace filled with years and honor. Tupac-Amaru lost his war, went through the horror of seeing wife, sons, relatives executed before his eyes and himself died by awful torture.

Actually, November fourth is the Fourth of July for those Indians of the great Good-Neighbor lands to the south who know the history of their own race. In the jungle towns and villages which cling to the awesome heights of the cordilleras, descendants of the men and women Tupac-Amaru tried to save from a fate worse

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than slavery, annually revere his memory. Teeka has never failed Tupac-Amaru.

And the Teekians who accorded Tom and me such charming hospitality were not the only ones who revered and celebrated his memory. Other tribes to the north and south and east and west took time off on this anniversary to eat cats, roast monkeys and drink their yucca rum copiously.

Indians on "white spots" all over South America's jungles and hidden places regard the red general as a symbol of hope and equality. Stories of his prowess, the prowess of one of their own kind, have penetrated the depths of greenery which have never echoed the footfall of a white. The Lecos, the Chimanes, the Aranos, the Caripunas, the Maneteris, the Mojos, the Itenez and the Baures, savages some, cannibals some, primitive all, cherish this link to the "outside" world, as something which gives them "face." The "Great Week" of the jungle enables the savages and semi-savages, red men all, to relive the defiance of another day, the glory of a lost cause which justified them, exalts them.

Late in the eighteenth century Tupac-Amaru, Inca chief and Spanish-created nobleman, started the great revolt which came within an ace of driving the Spanish power back over the sea. What caused this man, who had everything to lose and nothing but the welfare of his people to gain, to risk his high position, his life and the lives of those dear to him?

The answer lay in the gloomy cloth mills, the deep mines, the sweat and blood-drenched plantation fields of

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the Spanish conquerors. In the mills Indian men and women contributed years of forced labor. In the mines and on the plantations, the same held true. Not only was the labor forced, but the workers were held in absolute confinement. In the mines they lived for years at a time underground, far from the light of the sun. In the mills the doors were opened for only a few minutes at noon to admit women-folk with food for the workers. The lash and the flogging post were in daily use, the tortured cries of men and women falling on the deaf ears of brutal overseers.

Forced labor was not all of which the Indians had to complain. Half of what they earned or grew or created was taken from them as a tribute tax to the government. Every male from eighteen to forty-five was subject to this tax. But the local corregidores or provincial governors collected it from all Indians and pocketed the difference between the legal and illegal tax. The corregidores also held an absolute monopoly of trade with the Indians, selecting the goods and setting the prices.

There were worse abuses than these. With or without excuse, the corregidores and their white henchmen, the commanders of troops, almost any white man whose whim so moved him, would raid the Indian villages and towns, levying fines; and unhappy was the fate of the comely Indian maiden who could not escape in time to the jungle. She would be carried away in chains to the harem of the oppressor, to spend the better part of a lifetime in slavery, only to be thrown out to starve in old age.

TUPAC-AMARU

Tom and I watched our Teekian friends in the hot sun on the plateau on the "first day," the "Fourth of July," of the "Great Week." The old people sat in a huge semi-circle chanting of the bravery of the red general. Others, in mumbled prose, repeated the oft-told story of his sagacity.

The great Chief with the rat's tooth through his nose personally lashed a nude Mosotene girl. He was the "Spaniard," his naked body smeared with white clay to make his role all the more realistic. His whip was a light, harmless vine, but the "slave girl" writhed and shrieked in simulated pain which seemed as real as that of her more unfortunate forbears more than a century and a half before in the vicinity of Cuzco.

For the first time during our stay in Teeka we discerned angry flashes in the eyes of the Teekan men as their emotions were aroused by subsequent pantomime recalling the cruelty of the white man.

When the Chief and the girl disappeared quickly from the stage, a *tableau vivant* followed to excite the population further. They roared their outrage when the new actors, a young Indian virgin and a burly warrior, smeared with white mud from the banks of the Chuniari, presented the story of rape charged against the conquerors time on end by the colored race from the shores of the Caribbean to the curling tip of South America. The realism of this event was astounding. Both Tom and I had uneasy feeling for a moment as we saw the resentment of fair skin rage in the expressions of the onlookers as they turned their eyes in our direction.

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(One of Illiacia's great-great-great-grandmothers had herself eluded a harem collector and escaped, miraculously, to Teeka. Other women, some marching alone, others with their men, fled into even more distant places, settled with far-away tribes, brought into the strange tangled land the stories of Tupac-Amaru's bravery and leadership, lived to instill the legends, undyingly, in the minds of all, to pass on to new generations of the future accounts of the bestiality of the white oppressor, as well as the proud history of an Indian.

For a moment I felt that even she, my friend, glared at me with hatred in her heart as the antics of the players raked old coals and sleeping dogs turned into wolves. But nothing happened. I could have been wrong.)

From the time Tupac-Amaru came to man's estate and succeeded his father as a chief in 1762, he did all in his power to end the mountain of tyranny under which his Indian brothers groaned. For eighteen long years he bombarded the royal viceroys with lamentations, accusations and appeals. To do them justice, the high officials of the Spanish king sincerely desired to better the lot of the Indians. But the greed, cupidity and cruelty of the local corregidores defeated all their efforts at reform.

Finally in 1780 Tupac-Amaru concluded that words never would cure the Indians' wrongs. He decided upon action. Recognized in 1770 by the Spanish courts as the legal and lineal descendant of the Incas, he wielded immense influence among the Indians. He was the only man of his race in a position to lead a successful revolt, and he realized this.

TUPAC-AMARU

So on November 4, 1780, he ambushed and kidnaped Don Antonio Aliaga, the corregidore of the province of Tinta, which occupied the lovely Vilcamayu valley. This runs south between towering chains of the Andes from ancient Cuzco. At the time Bolivia was part of Peru.

Aliaga had been one of the worst of the corregidores, and Tupac-Amaru, after compelling him to sign an order on the provincial treasury for \$22,000 gold bullion, 75 muskets, and mules and horses, condemned him to death. He had Aliaga hanged in the plaza of the little town of Tungasuca, one of those of which Tupac-Amaru was chief. The scaffold was guarded by three ranks of the Chief's spearmen and Indians from miles around who had gathered to see the execution of their tyrannical overlord.

Within a day Tupac-Amaru had gathered an army of six thousand Indians fiercely determined upon revenge. But at this time and for some months after, the Indian Washington, like his North American contemporary, had no idea of fighting for independence. He had taken up arms solely to redress wrongs which in themselves were illegal. He had no quarrel with the king of Spain or his viceroys, only with the corregidores, the European landowners and the venal customs employees.

At the head of his army, Tupac-Amaru marched rapidly north in the Vilcamayu valley to capture the corregidor of the near-by province of Quispicanchi, but this worthy fled in time from his capital of Quiquijana

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to Cuzco. Tupac-Amaru pursued him and threw Cuzco into panic.

The local governor, Don Tiburcio de Landa, marched against him at the head of a thousand Spanish troops. Tupac-Amaru surrounded them, and all but twenty-eight were slain in a final desperate charge against the Indian lines at Sangarara. Characteristically, and with a civilized courtesy which shamed his foes, Tupac-Amaru freed these prisoners unharmed.

(This victory was reenacted by all of the Teekians, half of the men and women, all "Spaniards," being "slaughtered" by the conquering forces of their beloved red hero. The slain "Spaniards" threw themselves prostrate upon the ground as the spear-armed warriors of Tupac-Amaru stood above them plunging their weapons into the hearts of the vanquished butchers.

All of this wild activity, creating a small "dust bowl" upon the ceremonial plateau, caused Tom to sneeze violently, and that somehow broke the spell for everyone. Aunt Cotae came over to her would-be lover and whispered to him sternly. The old prospector seemed crushed with the rebuke.

It was a comedy moment, but in the midst of great and serious doings, and I kept my amusement under my belt. That's where it belonged in a situation like that out in the jungle where the white man is being depicted as a monster. Sacrilege even by a red man at such a moment in the Teekians' "Passion Play" would have been serious enough. Laughter of a Caucasian might have been disastrous. The people were working themselves into a frenzy.

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It recalled the night when the Tipuanians awoke the sleeping things of the jungle with their roars during the "purification" of Carmelita.

But a sneeze is a sneeze. The Teekians, their big scene spoiled, were forced nevertheless to forgive Tom for this natural phenomenon. The Teekians understood simple things. They sneeze themselves. But a laugh at such a moment—well, that might have been something else again.)

After his victory over Don Tiburcio, Tupac-Amaru could have taken Cuzco in his stride and had he done so his rebellion would, in all likelihood, have succeeded. But he still believed that further violence could be avoided, that the horrors of war need not be unleashed on a great and fruitful country.

Instead of capturing Cuzco he toured the Indian towns and villages bringing men to his standard by the thousands. A private letter of the period describes his entry into the town of Azangaro in January, 1781, riding a white horse, splendidly caparisoned. "He was armed with gun, sword and pistols," says this letter, "and was dressed in blue velvet richly embroidered with gold, with a three-cornered hat and an 'uncu' [spear symbol of the Incas] over all. A gold chain was around his neck to which a large, golden sun was attached."

(When Chief Uta appeared in the role of Tupac-Amaru, riding our own little macho, now fat from his long, lazy days in the rich pastures of the Teekians, the Indians went wild. Uta's "sword" was carved from chonta palm, his "gun" was my luger, borrowed with

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much ceremony for the occasion. His "blue velvet" was the skin of a tiger, and it was the first time he had been clothed since the ceremonies of the year before; his "three-cornered hat" was fashioned out of fresh, green banana leaves; his "uncu," a spear of bamboo. Fantastic? Well, it would have been, and comic enough to make anyone laugh, anywhere else on earth. But there was dignity in this business out in the jungle that afternoon.)

He then returned to his army on the outskirts of Cuzco where he defeated a Spanish force six miles from the city. He wrote to the military commander and to the Bishop of Cuzco asking that the tribute be abolished and that a judge be set up for the Indians in every province, with a court of appeals sitting at Cuzco. If this were done he agreed to lay down his arms. His moderate demands were rejected with scorn.

He then attacked Cuzco, but the Spaniards had been reinforced and held the town against the Indians, few of whom had firearms. Tupac-Amaru was compelled to retreat down the Vilcamayu valley to Tinta. Another Indian force under Tupac-Amaru's cousin, Diego, was defeated at Calca and Yucay. Diego fell back on Tinta where he joined Tupac-Amaru, who was at the head of an army of 60,000 Indians. Unfortunately there were not only few firearms among them but less discipline, although all revered the Chief as the Inca and redeemer of their race.

So formidable had the revolt become by this time that the royal viceroys in Lima on the Pacific, and in Buenos Aires, thousands of miles to the southeast, became thor-

TUPAC-AMARU

oughly alarmed. Tupac-Amaru had lighted a fire which might spring blazing throughout all the Spanish possessions. All he needed was one or two notable victories. And by this time, all his moderate demands refused, he had come out solidly for Indian independence.

The Lima viceroy sent General Jose Del Valle against Tupac-Amaru's main force in the north with an army of 17,000. The armies clashed first at Checacupe, where the royal forces were victorious by superior arms, and again at Combapata. The Indians fell back on Tinta, their stronghold; and there stark tragedy and treachery stepped into the picture. Tupac-Amaru, his wife, sons, uncles and brother-in-law were betrayed into the hands of the Spaniards by Zunnuario de Castro, one of the Indian Washington's trusted lieutenants.

In May, 1781, the following horrible sentence was passed by the Spanish court on Tupac-Amaru:

He was "condemned to witness the execution of his wife, sons and other relatives; his tongue was to be torn out; he was to be pulled apart by wild horses while still alive; his arms, legs and head were to be set up on poles; and all documents relating to his descent from the Incas were to be burned by the hangman; his property was to be confiscated; his family was to be declared infamous." The punishment was inflicted on May 18, 1781, in Cuzco.

(The portrayal by the Teekians of this harsh sentence was accompanied by the beating of hundreds of inflated goat's bladders on the heads and stomachs of the audience. How these suddenly appeared from nowhere, just

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as old Uta was dragged from our little mule set upon by a group of vicious "Spaniards," his tongue "pulled out" while he made the most horrible grimaces imaginable, "torn apart" by two "horses"—Indians on all-fours—is a matter of mystery to me until this day. This was made all the more baffling because none in the audience wore clothes under which they could have hidden them. The bladders made tom-tomish noises, and the plaintive wailing of the onlookers, kept up for a full hour in a cadence of despair, drew over the earth a pall of dread and hopelessness which turned the green jungle into widows' weeds.)

But the revolt was by no means ended and from this time on, in revenge for the death of their high-souled leader, the Indians, under the leadership of Tupac-Amaru's cousin Diego carried on a war of extermination against their tyrants.

In the course of this occurred one of the most notable exploits of the Indians. They had besieged the city of Sorata, and without artillery were baffled by its earthen ramparts lined with cannon. But Diego Tupac-Amaru devised a secret weapon worthy of any great captain. He built a dam against one side of the town, impounding the waters of countless streams which carried into the valley the melted snows of lofty Ancoma. When his huge reservoir was filled, he broke the dam and loosed the deluge against the earthen battlements of Sorata, which crumbled to pieces before the flood. On the heels of the waters the vengeful Indians swept into the town, slaying every man, woman and child of its twenty thousand inhabitants.

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(Deliberate comic relief was offered when little Sita, taking the part of "Sorata" was drenched by a warrior with water from a gourd. This brought gales of laughter. Sorata was inundated by Diego Tupac-Amaru. The liquid which was slashed over the body of Sita was to them, for all the world, the flood which cascaded from the dam on the cordillera peak to wipe away the battlements of the Spaniards and enable the heroic attackers to massacre the besieged overlords of red humanity.)

La Paz was later subjected to two long sieges which virtually reduced the population, swollen by thousands of refugees, to eating their last cats and rats. However, the defense succeeded in holding the town.

The revolt was not finally quelled until two years after the gruesome execution of Tupac-Amaru; and before it ended it had claimed the lives of more than 100,000 Indians and Spaniards.

Although defeated, the Indians were by no means broken. The noble spirit of their dead chief burned in their breasts. His soul went marching on, and the ghostly presence of the Indian Washington, who had so nearly succeeded in freeing his own race, was to ride before the Indian and Spanish armies of the War of Independence some twenty years after he gasped his agonized last in the great plaza of Cuzco.

All of these historic steps in the Indians' amazing fight to free themselves from the yoke of the hated invader, were pictured by the Teekians in pantomime and dialogue. The players were exhausted. Suddenly there was

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a moment of silence. The actors retired down the side of the elevation, out of sight. Old Chief Uta waved his hand in dismissal. It was a benediction. The show on the plateau was over.

As far as I was concerned, the end of the "Passion Play" was a relief. All of this delay was leading me no further on the trail to Fawcett. I was impatient to push ahead, beyond the Heath River, where the tree is which stings like a bee, where cannibal vines thrive on the flesh of the human, and strange creatures roam the earth. Beyond might be the garden of Eden, the City of Light. Beyond might be Fawcett.

"Push on!" a voice seemed to say. "You're missing something."

But it was not yet time. Tom still had to have his oppi, and there were six more days to tarry in Teeka until the "Great Week" was over.

33.

Cupid Juice

THE CHARMING TEEKIANS WERE THROUGH-THE-LOOKING-glass people; they were naïve and disarming children of Peter Pan.

The minds of these citizens of Teeka were peopled with harmless diminutive creatures, little dwarfs with many meanings. For instance, there was no envy in Teeka, because one of the dwarfs in the Teekian mind was a little green dwarf, an ugly little dwarf, as ugly as a bug, a green bug. If one turned green with envy the envious one would stay green for the remainder of his life. The Teekian always was reminded of this possible fate because the ever-present dwarf could not be shaken out of the Teekian consciousness. The Teekian from the cradle to the grave ran a gamut of prodding parables and proverbs which kept him in a healthy frame of mind. Tolerance was the keynote of this philosophy, which had developed a quaint and fruitful result, tabuing the smug, exalting the "natural." No one, therefore, was ever envious in Teeka. After all, who wanted to remain for all time green like the ugly dwarf, like the ugly bug which climbs the trees!

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After the "Great Week" had passed, cool winds late one afternoon came out of the east over the plateau and tumbled falling bamboo leaves in nervous patterns on our private beach, Illiacia's and mine, on the banks of the ambitious Chuniari. There this naked Indian girl explained all of these things to me.

Most travelers, with the usual preconceived notions, would pass the snug little village of Teeka, taking a hasty look at the people and mumbling, "Savages." Such a one would be doing the "savages" an injustice, and would himself miss one of the most refreshing experiences of his life by failing to tarry and get acquainted.

Any people who have banished prudery can hardly be called savages. Civilization might do well some day to emulate the doctrine of this land of cocoanut milk and wild honey—if it could.

Where is there a more delightful place than a land without envy, where a red little dwarf in the minds of all the people constantly warns even against blushing? The Teekians have it all figured out.

"If you blush, you are showing shame or shock over something of which you should not, necessarily, be ashamed. Too much modesty makes for immodesty. So don't blush. Everything is natural."

There's no greed in Teeka. It is a bountiful land, where a minimum of labor provides for the needs of all. Everyone is related in Teeka; there are no strangers. It is one big family, with strong blood ties which make for loyalty in all things.

Only once in the history of the people did a serpent

CUPID JUICE

enter this paradise. This was the serpent of envy itself.

"Green dwarfs of envy, Great White Callaguaya, even now threaten the women of Teeka with their horrible hues. There is no oppi. The caapi vines from which it is made have been blighted and cursed.

"Love is important in Teeka, and when there was oppi there was ample love for all. There are more women than men in Teeka, Great White Callaguaya, and there is a need for oppi here. The women grumble, Great White Callaguaya. Those whose men need no oppi are envied by others less fortunate. It is a sad day in Teeka. The green dwarfs are gleeful in many homes."

Illiacia spoke rapidly, passionately.

"I wanted some oppi myself, Illiacia."

"You?" The Indian girl looked at me searchingly.

"Not to drink. No! For Tom. He looks longingly always at your aunt Cotae."

Illiacia sighed. "The forests have been searched as far as three days afield. Everywhere the caapi vines are dead."

"Then search four days afield, Illiacia—five days afield. Tom has got to have his oppi before we can leave Teeka. I have been good to you, Illiacia."

"Aye, Great White Callaguaya. You made four of us out of eight of us. We will search four days afield—five days afield—even to the point where the sun falls out of the sky. Tomorrow, Aunt Cotae, Sita, Ita and I will look for the leaves and the roots of the caapi vine."

Good, Illiacia! Go out to the spot where the sun drops each evening out of the sky, go to the horizon and beyond for the vegetable monkey glands, for Tom's Foun-

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tain of Youth. Go search the great search for the stuff which makes old men young again, and brings a smile to the face of a frustrated maiden, even one as old as Aunt Cotae, full of her eighteen years.

Everything is cockeyed in Teeka. Go on out! Bring home the caapi plant, bring home the oppi. Teeka needs cupid liquid. Teeka is a paradise. Keep it that way, Illiacia. No one has ever been hungry in Teeka for anything before.

It is a big responsibility, Illiacia. You are the medicine woman of the jungle. Medicine woman—twelve-year-old medicine woman. Go find that plant in the hidden glade in the matted growths of a billion green acres. Track it down, Illiacia; get caapi. Fawcett's waiting. I can't keep faith with Nina ("Thank you, thank you") until you come home with the stuff old men anywhere would give their souls to quaff. Rattle the bones, sift the dust of Ponce de Leon, Illiacia. Florida never had anything like this. Tom hasn't much time, so don't be long.

And say! There's another thing, too. Thank Tom's lucky stars that the Teekians also have in their "wonderland" minds a little dwarf, just as ugly as the green one, representing envy, or the red, stunted thing which outlaws prudery. This is the dwarf the Teekians think of as ingratitude. They see it plainly every waking moment of their lives, even in their dreams.

There's no ingratitude in Teeka. The dwarf of ingratitude takes care of that. Good little dwarf! You're a treacherous and sickly little thing, but you're a good guy to have around in times like these.

CUPID JUICE

Illiacia has never forgotten the emerald bullet. She never will. She's your slave, but damn that Copiari! Illiacia seems to get better-looking every day. You somehow just don't seem to want gratitude alone from Illiacia.

Illiacia held my hands as she got to her feet. It was a subservient sort of business—the way she held the hands. It showed that she respected this Great White Callaguaya.

Tom had some down-to-earth experience which caused him to observe more than once: "Better never have a woman look up to you. Better always that you make her sorry for you. You'll get much further."

34.

The Leaf

A THOUSAND CHEMISTS IN ALL PARTS OF THE WORLD have worked studiously for generations to discover the mysterious therapy dynamics of the Malpighiaceae family which gave birth to *Banisteria caapi*, the jungle's green "Fountain of Youth," a woody vine whose powers have challenged the best scientists of civilization. Cautiously, respectfully, warily, learned men have lectured about it, written about it, steeped it in white-tiled laboratories, probed it, poked it, smelled it, drunk it, and yet they do not feel that they know enough of the constituents of the weed, or its effects, to give a final opinion as yet on the shrub. The only known specimen in the United States is treasured at Yale University as highly as the rarest botanical jewel.

The juices of this erect and often clambering shrub have filled test tubes in the citadels of the greatest pharmacutists. Celebrated botanists have braved the Amazonas to seek it out in places where the anaconda slithers, where cannibals and head hunters lurk in ambush, where oftener than not tropical diseases strike the invader.

THE LEAF

There has never been any doubt about the fact that science feels caapi "has something," although just what it "has" is not to this day fully established—that is, in the opinions of the deliberate laboratory technician. One certain result of tests, however, shows that caapi does contain, among other alkaloids, a poison startlingly similar to strychnine whose undetermined qualities are still being studied.

All of this, in the opinion of many a South American, is a lot of foolishness and a waste of time. Caapi is too well known to thousands of aborigines and mestizos south of the Caribbean Sea to be much of a mystery any more.

Oppi, from which caapi is made in the jungle, has only one secret, a well-guarded ingredient which makes it tick. Before this is added, caapi juice is nothing more nor less than a highly stimulating tonic, which Bolivians drink in small quantities in bottles labeled "Ayahuasca." The strychnine in this beverage serves to increase the senses of smell, touch, sight and hearing. It hits the central nervous system, excites the partaker in many ways, increases reflex action, stimulates muscular activity.

Most men who drink this regularly have very little reason to complain about any physical shortcomings, but in extreme cases, where advanced age has taken hold, caapi juice is not enough. Here oppi, and oppi alone, is indicated. Caapi, or "cupid juice," must have the other ingredient, the secret "leaf" known only to a few top jungle medicine men and women, from Colombia to the shores of Lake Titicaca.

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Oppi was what Tom wanted, caapi juice with the "leaf."

Here admittedly is a dangerous concoction, and it has been known as such to white men ever since Pizarro observed weird ceremonials of oppi-drunk natives more than four hundred years ago. Too much oppi will craze its victim, just enough will give him the glandular strength he most desires. Colombian Indians who deliberately imbibe the stuff too freely go wild in flagellation ceremonies which often leave numbers of them dead from scourgings before the effects of the drug wear off.

Caapi juice with the "leaf"—that's oppi.

There were plenty of "leaves" available in Teeka. Illiacia mentioned this confidently before she and her helpers departed for their botanical explorations over to the edge of the earth where the sun drops out of the sky. But just what these mysterious "leaves" were we had to wait for her return to find out.

Patiño

DAYS PASSED WITHOUT WORD FROM THE TRACKERS OF "cupid." Tom was impatient, restless. He was not the only one. Irritability cropped out everywhere. This was not at all like the accustomed serenity, the calm, the sweetness of the women of Teeka. Tongues became sharp. Pent-up things, frustration, longing, got under the skin of the starved female majority of the little Indian paradise.

Those women who cooked our monkeys, who formerly had been tender, respectful and self-effacing as they served our food, now threw their earthen pots of stew indifferently into our laps. More than once during suppertime, hot liquid was splashed over everything as the jittery waitresses pushed dishes under our noses, or slid them almost contemptuously within our reach on the ground.

One nervous maiden, long deprived of the attentions of any man, snapped angrily at old Tom at lunch one afternoon when he remarked that he did not like "wharf rats."

"That's not a rat," barked the cook who had offered

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it to him. "That's a little monkey. The mother was pregnant. It is the most delicate of all things."

"I ain't eating a foetus," Tom snapped back, "—of nothing!"

Our position was delicate during this time. We kept our peace, avoided friction, hoping for an early return of the four girls with a big haul of the caapi wine. Meanwhile, we stayed pretty much to ourselves. We had plenty of time for a lot of talking. Tom didn't seem to mind. It kept his thoughts away from Aunt Cotae and the hoped-for stimulation of oppi which he believed would win her love.

I kept him as far away from the village as possible, down on the Chuniari, paying gold in its little tributaries, prospecting with dry-pan "washings" on hillsides kilometers distant. We talked of everything—of the armadillo, which we had eaten many times, grave robber, and stupid as the Australian egg-laying echidna. And we asked ourselves why it tasted like pork, and why pork tasted like human flesh—I didn't dare give the answer.

These days were escapist days for Tom. He told me stories of the "Lake Monster," the virgin-eating beast of Lake Rongagua, which was not far away. He promised to take me there, via Rurenabaque, Reyes, Pedro, Carmen, Bicuiche, San Cristobal, San Ramon, San Anton.

"I'll kill the snake myself," Tom boasted. "The natives say it's fifteen feet high, a hundred and twenty feet long."

"A man also said he saw a dinosaur in the interior of Ecuador," I retorted.

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"Well," Tom asked, "who can say he didn't?"

And, as a matter of fact, who can?

"Or that Fawcett has found his garden of Eden?" I said exploratorily.

"That's right, too," Tom asserted. "Who can say he hasn't? Lots of South America has not even been explored."

"And Bolivia?"

"Well, a fourth of it, 130,000 square miles of it, hasn't been visited, except on the fringes, by a white man. Anything can be in those parts."

"Out here it's hard to believe you're in Bolivia," I thought, aloud.

"You're not," the prospector declared.

"Then where?"

"You never have been in Bolivia. No one else ever has, either. This country is not Bolivia. It's misnamed. This is Patiño. It's been Patiño ever since old Simon got his power with tin."

I had been waiting for this story for a long time. Back in La Paz, German bartenders told how Tom had known the fabulous tin king at one time as well as any other man, this mysterious, almost fabulous tycoon, Simon Patiño, as little known as Sir Basil Zaharoff, as wealthy as Henry Ford and a couple of Rockefellers, the son of a mestizo Indian cobbler who now could buy the jewels of the Maharajas.

"Did you know him, Tom?"

"Sure I did," he said; "his old man used to make my shoes."

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Simon Patiño's wealth, estimated variously from \$500,000,000 to \$5,000,000,000 and upward, is one of the phenomena of fate and strange "dumb" maneuvering which has no equal in finance of all history.

Tom knew. He told me the story himself as we waited for the return of Illiacia.

"Simon wasn't a day over thirty," he said, "when he was working as a collector, a humble job, even for Cochabamba. Climbing up and down those hills and valleys constantly is work not even a poor mestizo welcomes. He collected installment payments for the Cochabamba Supply Depot, and afoot and on mule back he had to search out creditors of his company as high as 16,000 feet above sea level, in little, individually worked mines, on fincas, miles outside of Cochabamba. It was as tough a job as a man could get, except in one of Patiño's mines today.

"I told you I'm an old man, and it was early one morning, more years ago than I like to remember, when young Simon went to collect two hundred dollars from an Indian who owned a tin claim over on the other side of Oruro. When Patiño finally got to the remote place, the Indian sadly told him he couldn't pay.

"'But I'll give you my claim,' he said. 'That's worth two hundred dollars.'

"Patiño looked the property over and decided the miner was right. He gave him a receipt, took a deed and started his long trip back to Cochabamba, thinking he'd done a good day's work.

"But when he explained his business deal to the boss, it didn't get the reaction he had expected. Patino was

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thrown out of his job, forced to pay the two hundred dollars and keep the deed to the tin mine for himself.

"He told me he felt pretty low when he went home and explained to his wife that he had been fired. But that woman had something Patiño lacked. Instead of bawling her husband out, she told him she thought the whole business was about the best thing that had ever happened to both of them. And how right she was!

"Next day, that woman borrowed five hundred dollars from every relative she could tap, packed a couple of mules with their household belongings and set out with Patiño to their new property to work it. With their own hands they were not long in uncovering the biggest lode of tin in the history of Bolivia. Two years later they had twelve workmen helping them and were doing all right.

"But what happened soon after their lucky strike just about drove them crazy. A United States mining outfit sent representatives to see Patiño and offered him over \$300,000 in cash for the claim. He accepted one evening in the kitchen of his mining shack, while his wife was away superintending the workings. He was signing the deed over to the Americans when she came in, saw what was going on and knocked the pen out of his hand.

"A right smart woman she was, too, puré-white Spanish. It wasn't long before they had bought up nearly all the mines in the country.

"No one knows how rich he is today, and few Bolivians even know what he looks like. He has spent most of his time out of the country—in Paris, in Spain, every-

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where except Bolivia. He gave his son a check for a million dollars when he married a Spanish princess in 1929."

I had written about that amazing extravaganza for a newspaper long before.

"Not only that," I told Tom; "old Simon had the check exhibited in a jewel case and placed under lights for all the guests to see."

"That was the Indian in him coming out," Tom said.

"But *what* Indian?"

That's the whole point of telling this story, rare and little known as it is. Lecos, Uro, Mosotene, Aymara, Quechua, Arano, Mojos? What Indian blood made Patino tick?

Was it the blood of the royal Inca? Were his ancestors the lazy Uros of Lake Titicaca? Does the blood of the heroic Tupac-Amaru course through his veins? Were his forbears sired by warring tribes?

Well, it just doesn't matter, at all. The more you read about the Spaniards' behavior in the New World, the more respect you have for the red man. And the more you see of the red man, any red man, in his native setting, free of white taint, inside or out, the more you understand that Patiño should be proud of that part of his own blood which is not white. In the jungle, as nowhere else, you will see how the white man suffers by comparison with the red.

There is much "mopping up" yet for the former to do down under the Equator, as well as above it to the shores of the Caribbean Sea, and he will drench the land with a few billion gallons of aboriginal blood to win it.

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When the time comes, when development there is sufficiently attractive, he will accomplish this in the name of "civilization," but it will be just one more crime to charge against the "superior" race. It's inevitable—you can't do anything about it, to stop it. But there is one who will pray, pray every day of his life that they spare Teeka in the process.

Suppose Patiño did show off a little with his million-dollar check? Figure it out for yourself. He could have made it out for \$50,000,000 just as well. Did not its very smallness show unusual restraint?

What if Patino did give a Monte Cristo extravaganza for his son? It was a refreshing throwback to the good, honest simplicity, the directness, the forthrightness of his red forbears. Indians just don't beat around the bush.

Spare Teeka, white man, spare Teeka! Sherman, don't burn Conyers, Georgia, down.

Those were the things we talked about out in the jungle, giant serpents, dinosaurs, Patiño, grave-robbing, cadaver-eating armadillos. We talked about Fawcett too—only Tom had sort of lost interest in Fawcett—and I guess I was finding things in Teeka fairly attractive myself. Anyway, we talked about everything at this time except oppi. We did a lot of thinking about it, and wondered constantly when Illiacia would return; but we found it more comfortable not to talk about that.

During these days Tom killed a dozen howling monkeys, humanlike things bigger than terriers, monkeys with goitered underjaws, covered with long, soft, maroon-colored hair, delicacies which he turned over to

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the community kitchen of Teeka. The little fellows, equipped with cartilage horns in their windpipes, howled peculiarly enough before old Tom's barbs found their mark, but on being struck they wailed piteously until the curare took effect and quieted them forever. This is not a pleasant sport. It leaves a bad taste in the mouth, the feeling that little men and women have been slaughtered, cruelly. Babies crying in the treetops!

But I was a jungle greenhorn and easily affected. Old Tom didn't seem to mind.

"We've gotta eat, haven't we? We've gotta live off the land, haven't we? We can't live on our perfume, can we, or our arsenic pills? And we can't eat our gold.

"It's the monkey or us," was Tom's philosophy. "Let 'em howl." (They don't howl long after a barb pierces their soft, maroon-covered hide. That's something.)

36.

Isolation Ward

DISEASE WAS PRACTICALLY UNKNOWN IN TEEKA. AN EPI-
demic of smallpox which decimated the population in
years gone by was only vaguely remembered, even by
the oldest inhabitant.

There had been an occasional attack of paludal, or
malarial, fever; babies sometimes were born dead, and
one little boy had a clubfoot, but no one in Teeka had
ever heard of measles, or chickenpox, or typhoid. Sim-
ple bellyache, for which the Callaguaya expertly pre-
scribed, was possibly the most serious malady, but a
drop or two of urine usually fixed this complaint up
nicely.

Only one "great sickness" ever troubled the care-free
Teekians. They spoke of it, when they spoke of it at
all, in whispers expressing their dread and fear. The
mention of the word for it brought panic to their fair
land, set them quivering. Teekian mothers never spanked
their babies. They never had to. If they wished to disci-
pline them, they only needed to speak this awesome,
frightful word, and the offspring would promptly and

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meekly quiet down. But the mention of *leprosy* by Teeka's mothers was made only in the cases of the most incorrigible juvenile delinquency. When this was done, it usually frightened the parents as much as the children themselves, and for that reason was used most sparingly.

Another way to control troublesome youngsters, was merely to whisper the word "pit." This had a dreadful connotation which worked wonders in discipline for obstreperous youth. The boldest became angelic when this frightful thing was mentioned. "I'll throw you in the pit, you little brat!"

"The Pit" was close to the lives of the children and everyone else in the village. "The Pit" was the skeleton which rattled in Teeka's closet, a blot, a cross, a hideous cancer the people had perforce to bear in an otherwise almost untroubled, disease-free existence. But many weeks passed before Tom and I discovered the history of its evil significance.

During a previous visit, one day while Tom gnawed on a roasted cat's leg by way of lunch, he made a curious observation.

"Everyday at that same hour," he said, "the young gal Sakta headed around the plateau path with two pots of hot food. I wondered where she was going."

Tom threw the bone to the ground and followed. That schedule had had him puzzled ever since he'd been there. Forty minutes later he had the greatest shock since he first came to South America.

The nude Indian girl ran fast ahead of him down a winding green-bowered path, holding the two pots with

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expert balance, one in either hand. Tom pelted along after her.

Sakta stopped suddenly, placed her containers upon the ground and looked furtively about. She stood before a thatch-topped roof supported by four high chonta palm poles, a peculiar structure open on all four sides. Sakta satisfied herself that no one was aware of her actions. Tom shielded his presence by standing behind convenient foliage.

Although no one was anywhere to be seen, Sakta shouted as though to the empty building:

"Sonu! Sonu!" she called. "Mita! Mita!" she cried.

"Damned strange," Tom thought.

"Sonu! Sonu!" Sakta shouted again. "Mita! Mita!"

Suddenly, from nowhere at all, came a feeble, hollow answer to Sakta's hail. Then another. The first was the wavering voice of a man, the second a high-pitched anemic response from the throat of a woman.

"Aieeeee! Aieeeee!" called the man.

"Hieeeee! Hieeeee!" thinly, tremulously, came from the other.

Sakta suddenly produced a long rope which had previously been hidden in a clump of bushes. Then she did a very curious thing. She threw herself flat upon her stomach, tied an end of the rope to the earthen pot handle and lowered it rapidly out of sight beneath the thatched roof. Forty feet or more of the rope disappeared with its burden.

Again Tom heard the unearthly voices, coming as if from nowhere.

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"Ateee! Ateee!" one cried.

"That meant 'thank you,'" Tom said, "but where in hell was it coming from?"

Sakta retrieved the rope, beat off one end with a stone, being careful not to touch that part which had been knotted around the pot handle, tied it again around the other container of food and this, too, disappeared forty feet below the floor of the jungle.

"Ateee! Ateee!" This time it was the woman who thanked Sakta for the food.

"By gad!" exclaimed Tom. "It was 'The Pit.' I always thought it was just a legend."

In his excitement, Tom almost shouted his discovery. The Indian girl overheard, and sprang to her feet in alarm. Tom stepped from his hiding place and walked toward "The Pit." Sakta recoiled in horror at his approach.

"Vashtee! Vashtee!" she cried, holding up her hands as though to warn him away, ward him off. "Vashtee, vashtee, White Callaguaya! Vashtee, vashtee, man of fair skin."

"Unclean! Unclean!" It was the age-old warning of the presence of the leper.

But Tom walked on toward the girl. He pushed her to one side. "I'll take my chances," he said. "I want to see what this is all about."

The girl stood by, trembling. Tom took his powerful flashlight from his belt, lay prone upon the ground and stared intently into the gloom of the deep hole. The black cavern revealed nothing until the prospector

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flooded it with light. Then a startled vampire bat roared upward from the pit like a black, velvet rocket, hissing in flight so close to his line of vision he could see its malevolent grin of death. Its vacuum mouth puckered leech-like to reveal needle-sharp teeth in ugly horror serrations.

Tom played the beam of light down the walls of the great hole, revealing damp, dripping sides of black earth, upon which water spiders had woven blankets of white webs.

"Halloooo! Halloooo!" he called.

His voice echoed sepulchrally, but there was no response from the hole. When his eyes became accustomed to the illuminated shaft, he discovered, sickeningly, the source of the anemic cries of gratitude which had answered Sakta's hail and her offerings of food.

The beams blinded for a moment two human souls who sat squatting upon the very bottom of the forty-foot pit. One was the wreckage of a naked man, the other of a skeleton-like woman who held her pot of monkey stew. Their skin was a sickly, bloodless white. Their arms and legs resembled the stems of plants which grow under wet logs out of the light of the sun. Both had unnaturally large, protuberant, etiolated stomachs out of all proportion to their pitifully wasted bodies. Startled by the light, they raised their hands involuntarily to ward off unwelcome rays which stabbed their vision painfully.

The two occupants shrank into a corner of the pit, winced, spilled their food, clung to each other desper-

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ately, whimpered pathetically. The bottom of the pit was covered with earthen bowls.

It was obvious that their caretakers never retrieved their crockery.

"Damn it all," Tom said, "you just can't quarantine love."

This was how Tom stumbled upon the pathetic story of Sonu and Mita, the classic romance of Bolivia's great unknown vegetable fastness, a classic of love and sacrifice of simple hearts and noble souls which, for purity and truth, has no equal anywhere under the Southern Cross. Tom swore he had not lied, that he had personally seen the two lovers with his own eyes.

The story of Sonu and Mita has inspired song and oratory around the campfires of Seringueros and other rubber workers from the Matto Grosso to the Beni land, chanted with the accompaniment of the sicu in every part of the red man's empire, recounted by the Kolliri in pagan rites extolling love and faith and revered wherever Indian women spoke in any dialect of the proud strength and virtue of their sex.

Eighteen-year-old Sonu, beloved of Mita, discovered telltale evidence of leprosy three weeks before he was "to borrow" the girl for a year's trial marriage. The romantic youth had recently sojourned for five days with a bearded tribe on the far-away Enapurea, far north on the water trail to Tequeje. It was there, agreed horrified old Uta, that his son and heir had become infected with the "great sickness," the rotting plague.

Tribal law dictated only one decision—isolation in a

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hut five kilometers distant from the village of Teeka, banishment in lonely, eternal quarantine, far from the confines of the village and the haunts of his people, until death freed him from the dreadful solitary.

In due course, weeping natives constructed the "isolation ward" of the jungle for occupancy of sad young Sonu. Mita wept unceasingly, and twice attempted to take her life by drowning in the deepest parts of the Chuniari.

But Sonu was a leper boy, who also loved. He would not stay isolated. Three times after his confinement in the hut, Sonu slipped back in the night for rendezvous with his sweetheart. Three times Sonu was sternly warned, driven ahead of prodding poles by vigilantes, back to the retreat.

Mita, on each occasion, was bathed and scrubbed with water mixed with the oil of parrots' skins to cleanse her of infection.

When Sonu and Mita were discovered together for the fourth time, embracing passionately under the branches of a sapodilla tree, the lovers were torn apart, Sonu tied to a jungle water oak with strong ropes of vine, and the village elders met in solemn conference in the big powwow house to discuss the latest violation.

It was old Uta himself who suggested in a voice which choked with emotion that his only son be cast into a pit from which he could never climb to endanger the health of the people. But over and over Chief Uta mumbled: "My son, my son, how lonesome you will be!"

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And into this pit the struggling boy was lowered one day by ropes which were cast in after him. Mita, again anointed with the oil of parrots' skins, stood by, watched the drama with strange and unaccustomed calm and fortitude. Possibly it was at that moment that her dangerous plan was born.

At any rate, the next morning when parents and sisters called to her, they received no answer. Later they discovered that her tamandoa hide had not been slept upon the night before. Mita had disappeared.

Days passed. All efforts to locate her failed. Her wailing mother searched for her body far up the Chuniari. Posses scoured the deepest parts of the jungle. Tom-toms beat out messages to neighboring tribes asking for aid. A thousand miles of jungle were covered by runners without success. The earth had swallowed up the sorrowing betrothed of Sonu.

The fact that this was literally true was discovered later—a long time before Tom learned the secret—when the girl who daily lowered food to the leper boy ran excitedly back to Teeka, announcing that Mita had joined Sonu in the hole of living death.

"It was he," Sakta had said, "who asked for double portions of food."

Chief Uta smiled strangely. "My son will have company. *Good* company.

"Leave them there," he commanded, "in their leper pit of love."

And there, too, they might have stayed and lived to

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ripe age, except for a new tragedy, which is believed by Indians in all parts of Bolivia.

One day a cloudburst drenched the area with tons of "white death." This was followed by torrential rains. The people of Teeka gathered to pray.

"Keep the Pit dry," they cried.

"Save Sonu! Save Mita," chanted the villagers.

"Aye, aye," implored Uta, "save these children of love."

After the storm ended every Teekian ran to the Pit. Their prayers had not been answered. The forty-foot hole was more than three-quarters filled with water. The bodies of the leper lovers floated, faces downward.

Chief Uta at first gazed half sadly into the depths. Then his face lighted.

"The children," he said, finally, "are cured. Now they are souls. Souls are never ill. Bury them where they are."

Obedient workers filled the Pit with dirt.

The Storm

ILLIACIA, ILTA, AUNT COTAE AND SITA CAME BACK TO Teeka one night with a large bundle of caapi vines. They ran into the excited village ahead of the storm—rain winds which rode a tropical tempest out of unmapped jungle “blank spots” in the home of meteorological tumult where hurricanes are born. Hot sheets of water cascaded from heaven’s reservoir, split wide open by equatorial lightning. Nature took her restraining finger out of the bung hole on high and spilled her entire wet reserve in drenching floods.

The Chuniari River swelled and burst. Great, startled crocodiles were flipped into the air like balsa-wood splinters. Parrots, millions of them, frightened birds which had never seen the equal of this unleashed fury, battled the hot gale winds to find havens in sheltered trees where they clung perilously to limbs like bobbing green feather balls.

The Chuniari flash-flooded in seconds, leaped its banks, became a Niagara of force and spray. Inky thunderheads churned in lighter storm clouds in black and

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white, outlined against swirling aerial whirlpools by sporadic sheet lightning. This illumination frequently revealed the steaming earth, as well.

The snug little houses of Teeka were shaken and some were uprooted with the first impact of the storm as its velocity made the jungle tremble. Occupants who barely escaped with their lives ran in panic to the great powwow house, stanchest of the native structures, for safety.

All of Teeka's green paths became rivulets. Knee-deep water rushed over the sides of the ceremonial plateau like a great natural falls, swept down, over and through, the Indian houses, washing gulleys through the area, sweeping everything before the mighty, growing wall. Only the powwow house of Chief Uta, built to withstand any natural force, remained dry and safe, as home after home of the Teekians fell, or became inundated or unroofed by the wind.

The storm roared in angry, frightening bass alarum, shrieked high tenor notes and piercing contralto overtones. Thunder beat the drum in the wild symphony which rattled the ribs of a hemisphere.

Great palms were uprooted, buckled, fell, and were swept away. Mighty jungle oaks took off under the impact and sailed, roots uppermost, into the sky. Teekian rooftops were lifted into the air as easily as toy paper gliders, and sailed off like crazy kites.

One after another of the villagers gained the security of the powwow house built tight against protective ledges. Chief Uta, his long rat tooth grotesquely reflecting flashes of lightning in its high ivory polish, stood in

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the entrance of his headquarters screaming directions to his little flock to run for shelter.

Within the structure itself, wavering, feeble shadows silhouetted fantastic designs upon the stanch chontapalm rafters. These came from a valiant little wood fire burning in the center of the building within a basket of rocks.

The caapi "cupid juice" hunters found this a beacon which guided them to safety with their precious discovery. Tom and I already had gained the entrance. The powwow main chamber, more than 300 feet long, now was crowded with every living Teekian—man, woman, and child. Chief Uta himself pulled the last, exhausted native within the structure and slammed the heavy doors against the tornado's assault. The powwow house itself groaned and creaked under the pressure of the raging hurricane.

Chief Uta counted noses, called out the names of his people. Only six persons did not answer. These were drowned in the deluge or crushed to death by falling timbers. Rescue expeditions would have been impossible. No one could have existed for a single minute outside the powwow house in the splinter-laden fury of wind and water.

Down on the Chuniari, phenomenal water spouts twisted and danced upon its rabid surface. The jungle screamed under the weight of water which reached to the lower limbs of high trees in the valleys and swept the nests of birds bobbing like crazy little grass boats on a voyage to the far-away Beni River with cargoes of

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multi-colored egg shells mixed with yolks and glue.

Within the powwow house now was heard wailing, mourning, for the dead, mixed with cries of happiness and congratulation over the safe return to Teeka of the four caapi-hunting girls. In the nervous shadows, Chief Uta's body was zebraed by dancing black and white patterns. The ancient Chieftain held up his hand for silence, commanded his people to kneel, raised his eyes to the ceiling and uttered a stentorian prayer to the god of the moon who rules the night.

He prayed for the souls of the drowned cousins of all, thanked the ruler of the evening for the safe return of the girls.

"They have brought caapi, great yellow god of the moon; they have brought caapi."

"Caapi, caapi, they have brought caapi," chanted the villagers. "Aye, they have brought caapi."

The announcement created a tremendous stir among the kneeling women. Eager, hungry lights were reflected in their eyes, intense longing, the prophecy of gratification.

Sacrilegious buzzing of irreverent suppliants followed the announcement. Tom and I, who also knelt with the aboriginals, heard it rise into a delirium above the roar of the storm outside.

Chief Uta finished his prayer.

"Thank thee for the strength of this place of refuge. Thank thee, too, for the caapi vines," he said. "Our searchers found a patch which had not been blighted and cursed."

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"Oppi, oppi!" screamed the women.

"Oppi, oppi," answered the Chief. "You shall have oppi."

The men of Teeka seemed strangely disinterested in the news. Tom, however, was highly excited.

"I'll have oppi tonight," he whispered to me. "I never saw Aunt Cotae looking as well."

Aunt Cotae, kneeling near Tom, gave him a coquetish smile. Old Tom reached over and patted her on her hip. Aunt Cotae allowed her hand to steal into Tom's, and left it there while her great Chief prayed.

"Tonight," concluded Uta, "the men of Teeka will have oppi. We shall make it here. Thank thee, yellow god of the moon for this miracle."

Outside, vicious currents of wind knifed the darkness screechingly. We knew the stars and the moon had been blotted out. Spear lightning stabbed a tattoo everywhere, furrowing the face of the earth. Only the powwow house seemed to escape.

But the women within this sanctuary were oblivious to the storm. Oppi would fill a compelling need. The hunger of Teeka's women soon was to be assuaged. This was as important as life—more important than death.

"Oppi, oppi!" they cried. "When?"

Chief Uta held up his hand for silence. His body weaved in shadowy distortions from the flickering flames of the fire, vague blotches of his projected torso casting lively giant-sized patterns the length of the assembly room.

"Oppi," he said, "will be yours tonight, with the leaf."

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"Oppi, oppi," screamed the delighted women. "Oppi with the leaf. Oppi for our men."

Uta signaled Illiacia. The girl stood up, carried her bundle of caapi vines to her Chief and placed them at his feet. She backed away, took her position close to my side. Beads of water from her wet, matted hair trickled down her graceful shoulder.

"Great White Callaguaya," she whispered, "I have not failed you."

"Nor Tom, Illiacia, nor your Aunt Cotae, nor the hungry women of your own village."

"It was for you, alone, Great White Callaguaya. Copiari needs no oppi. I hope to see him soon."

"That will hold you," commented vicious old Tom, who overheard.

What anyone said now seemed to make very little difference. The fascination of the setting would have gripped any man. Thousands of rats' teeth, strung on woven vines, and laced under the rafters, relics of old Chief Scangi, and Diento Negro rattled as the building shook and added a weird flavor to the momentous proceedings. Strings of red peppers dangling from hooks on the walls gyrated as the structure shook as though buoyed by an earthquake.

Strangest of all the phenomena was the hysteria of the women. Although their men glanced anxiously now and then toward the big storm doors which threatened to buckle any moment from outside pressure, their spouses and sweethearts had eyes only for the pot which Uta placed with a little water upon the central fire. Into this

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the Chief tossed bits of the caapi vines. He incanted unintelligibly over the mixture. He weaved his body significantly, waved his hands. He contorted his face, which mirrored in the deep bronze of his complexion darting reflections from the coals.

Now everyone was breathless. Neither Tom nor I could understand the ominous, throaty words which came slowly from the Chief's hoarse throat.

Soon the water boiled. The mixture within the pot convulsed, turned to pea-green ooze. This was a moment of importance.

"The caapi boils," announced Uta with ceremony.

"The caapi boils!" screamed the women of Teeka.

"Now for the leaf," said Uta.

"The leaf, the leaf," echoed the females in the audience.

"The leaf," old Tom muttered. "That's what makes it tick."

In the unreal light of the powwow house, at that moment, I saw Aunt Cotae impulsively, promisingly, squeeze the old man's arm.

"The leaf! The leaf!"

At last we were to know what makes oppi "tick."

Chief Uta for a moment left his witch's brew. He walked over to the side of the room, reached into a bag and withdrew a handful of black objects, all about six inches long, regarded them reverently, mumbled mumble-jumble. Chief Uta was talking to his leaves!

But only for a moment. He turned quickly after his strange incantation, wheeling on the ball of his bare

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right foot, walked quickly to the pot. Here he mumbled again, solemnly, convincingly even to alien whites. Tom, even, was impressed. I could see it by the expression in his face.

Outside the storm had not abated, but by this time not even the men of Teeka heard it. Hypnotized, they stared at the pot, at Chief Uta, at the "leaves" he held in his hand.

"What are the leaves?" Chief Uta asked suddenly. It was a signal for a chant.

"What are the leaves?" asked the people of Teeka.

"The leaves are the wings of beetles," responded Chief Uta.

"Damned if they're not," Tom whispered to me excitedly. "The wings were from big six-inch-long jungle beetles."

"Like cantharides, the Spanish fly," I said.

As the giant beetles' wings, fully as large as a grown man's hand, hit the vegetable stew, the people reacted wildly. All now squatted, yogi-like, in various parts of the powwow house. Their bodies swayed from side to side. They chanted, pulsatingly.

The desire of the women had reached a peak close to hysteria. The pitch of their singing, monotonous prophecies of fulfillment, drowned out the noise of the storm. Their men seemed half-embarrassed, shamefaced by the goings-on. They remained quiet, but shifted nervously now and then.

Wild, gyrating shadows weaved mad designs upon the rafters. I looked up at the nightmare pattern, and

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for the first time since my arrival in Teeka I saw a small white bottle, holding a candle, long since extinguished by the bustle and the wind, placed on a crude shelf near a shuttered window. This held my eye. I was fascinated. My heart beat faster. No one saw me as I inched quietly toward it, stood up for a second, held it in my hand for close inspection.

“Eno’s Fruit Salts!” These were the corrugated words in its glass—another link, another reminder of the Eno trail to Fawcett! The great explorer had passed through Teeka! Of that I had no doubt.

I stole back to my position beside Tom, upset by the discovery, restless now, more than ever, eager to be on my way to the Rio Madre de Dios, the River Heath, where the trees sting like bees, to find that damned garden of Eden, or die trying.

Hold on Fawcett, I’ll be there!

Miraculously almost, it seemed that nature changed the record just as Chief Uta announced that the oppi was ready. The sudden cessation of the storm, a typical jungle phenomenon, split eardrums with unaccustomed silence. In a brief second the rain stopped falling. The lightning went back home and the thunder retreated to the noisy realm whence it had come. From without we heard only the roar of the Chuniari swollen to desperation. But this, we knew, would not last for long. Before the morning the river would be back down again within the confines of its own ravaged banks. Tranquillity lay over the green acres at last.

The storm’s end, however, was barely noted by the

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crazed Teekian women within the smoky assembly chamber. They continued their chant, praised Chief Uta and Illiacia, sang pagan, wild songs of fulfillment—Omar Khayyamish joys to come, with virile men.

Chief Uta at this dramatic moment commanded Tom to come forward, stand before the pot of hope. Since there was not a soul in Teeka who did not know of the frustrated December-May romance, there was more than ordinary interest in his selection, one which no impatient woman seemed to resent in the least. After all, the lissome Aunt Cotae was one of them. She had her problems, too.

The fantastic old Chief dipped theatrically into his magic cauldron, scooped up a small gourd full of the steaming juice.

"Drink this, old man," commanded the Chief, "be thou young again."

Tom accepted the proffered gourd, held it awkwardly. He blew upon the contents to cool his porridge.

All in the powwow house now were respectfully quiet. The people stared at Tom with unabashed interest. Most affected was Aunt Cotae, who peered through the gloom at the fantastic stage with pin-point, eager eyes. Anticipation lighted the expression of her face.

Tom took this all in ludicrously. He stood first on one foot, then on the other, shifted nervously. He seemed embarrassed. He glared at his audience, screamed at the people, but seemed to address his remarks to me alone. He spoke in English.

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"Damn it," he commanded, "quit your staring! Haven't you got any manners? Don't you know sex is a personal thing?"

Then Tom valiantly quaffed his magic beverage. Aunt Cotae snapped her fingers victoriously, shrieked a happy hooray, or its equivalent, sprang to her feet, ran to the old man's side, grasped him by the arm, pulled him out through the big doors into the privacy of the now calm night.

One after another of the Teekian men duplicated Tom's procedure, marched reverently before Uta, sipped from the same gourd, were promptly pounced upon by wife or sweetheart, escorted through the door.

Finally, only Illiacia and I remained in the powwow house. She regarded me carefully. Chief Uta called last chance.

"I don't need oppi," I said. "I don't want oppi."

I thought of Chita in a grave back in the rocky soil of Tipuani, and a lot of things. Maybe I did need oppi at that moment, but I turned over on a tamandoa hide and went to sleep.

Next day the women rebuilt the houses of Teeka. Their men slept soundly on tigre hides under the sun.

None of the women frowned that day. Their smiles were happy, they hummed contentedly and did all of the work at hand with energy never known before in this lazy, peaceful place under the plateau which shelters it from ordinary rain winds which blow out of the east. They were most considerate. Their men were exhausted.

Later in the afternoon Tom showed up, shuffling

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down one of the eroded paths into the center of activity. Aunt Cotae followed dutifully. She grinned at everyone with brazen suggestiveness. Old Tom alone seemed glum.

"What's the matter, old man? You've had your oppi."

"I know it," said Tom sadly, "but damn it all, I just can't get used to Aunt Cotae's habit of eating mosquitoes.

"And another thing, she's got to start wearing sandals. The bottom of her feet are as rough and sharp as sandpaper."

That Damned Oppi

AFTER THE STORM THE JUNGLE LICKED ITS WOUNDS FOR a week. Our little macho had saved its life by breaking its tether in the rich pasture and galloping to safety behind the powwow house. It was there, after the oppi orgy, that we found the intelligent but frightened, trembling mule the next morning.

Bodies of dead alligators, crocodiles and sting rays rotted on the banks of the Chuniari. Feathers of parrots covered the jungle like red and green snow. Bodies of drowned tigers floated down the Chuniari for days after the deluge, accompanied by other jungle denizens, trapped off-guard. Huge carcasses of fishes crushed against rocks and banks by swirling torrents joined the parade, bobbed sickeningly, willy-nilly.

Tom's bad humor manifested itself in many ways. He was an unhappy man. He mumbled to himself one day when we went to survey the damage on the Chuniari, talked to himself, screamed at himself and everyone else, including disillusioned Aunt Cotaë. I reprimanded him sharply more than once. The last time he made one of his rare apologies.

THAT DAMNED OPPI

"I'm sorry. You are right, but the oppi don't work any more. I guess I'm too old."

I was frankly worried now about old Tom's sanity. He talked as a man whose mind was wandering. He spoke of a city of light beyond the River Heath. He saw the descendants of a strange and classic civilization seated on thrones of gold. Fawcett was there, the overlord of Eden. Ralph Fawcett was Crown Prince. Raleigh Rimmel was Prime Minister. It was an underground city with parapets which shot up from the earth and pierced the sky. These were structures of platinum, silver, gold, ornamented with emeralds, pearls, rubies.

Tom saw tall, prehistoric beasts like the dinosaur, grazing on the topmost branches of great jungle trees. Tom had the "map" showing the location of the fabulous \$11,000,000,000 treasure of gold, spirited away by the fleeing kings from Pizarro. His "map" was a knotted string.

"That's the way the Incas wrote," he said. "I can read their writing. We'll dig it up and be rich."

Tom fondled the string like rosary beads. It was at that moment when I looked at him, almost tearfully, that I made the decision to leave the jungle.

"Tom," I said, "you mean more to me than Fawcett. Who the hell is that guy, anyway? I'm taking you out, Tom—back to La Paz. I'll be crazy, too, if I stay much longer."

Tom looked at me as though he did not understand what I said.

"We'll go on and find the garden of Eden," he re-

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plied. "That's what we started out to do. You'll be glad."

Aunt Cotae and Illiacia sat by us and scraped dust from the wings of butterflies. This they rubbed under their armpits and over their breasts. The odor extracted from the tufts of male swift-moths resembled that of pineapple. No wonder, I thought, we could never sell perfume to the Mosotene belles of Teeka—they had winged perfume.

The strangeness of the land, the customs of the people, once more struck me forcibly. I was out of my element. I knew this more than ever when Aunt Cotae acted as jungle beautician, painting the eyelids of Illiacia with the crushed wings of blue butterflies.

To hell with Fawcett. Old Tom was sick. The jungle palled. There might be an Eden ahead, but now it had no interest for me. I made my decision impulsively, but finally.

"We're going back, Tom. Back to La Paz! We're leaving tomorrow, Tom, tomorrow at dawn. Get that through your wrinkled old skull."

Tom stared blankly ahead.

"Leaving? Leaving?" he asked, as though dazed, in a voice which was far, far away. "Leaving? Leaving?"

"Tomorrow, Tom, tomorrow." I half shouted this in answer to his feeble, half-pathetic questions.

"And Fawcett?" Tom asked.

"If Fawcett's alive, let him stay in his garden of Eden. If he's dead, let his bones rest forever where they are."

"I'm going on," Tom said.

"I'll tie you up and drag you back," I threatened.

THAT DAMNED OPPI

Tom's mind wandered again. "The jungle, the jungle, the interior jungle. Maybe that's Fawcett's garden of Eden," the old prospector murmured.

Illiacia and Aunt Cotae stopped making up. They could see something was wrong. The anguish in the old man's face was hellish. He was pale, gray.

"Maybe Fawcett's in Peru," he said, "in the heart of El Misti."

"That's the sacred home of the Inca's 'Fire God,' a volcano, Tom."

"I know, I know," he answered, "but he may be there. We will go together. We will see."

Aunt Cotae wept quietly. I guess I felt the same way. Anyway, I turned my head and held my hands over my face so the others couldn't see.

The jungle was sad.

But Illiacia was a practical soul. Intelligently, she placed her hand on Tom's forehead.

"The fires burn within this man's temples," she said. "The fevers curse him cruelly."

I felt the old prospector's pulse. His heart was racing, and no thermometer was needed to tell that his temperature was alarmingly high. We had none, anyway. Somehow you just don't seem to take a hospital into the jungle.

Tom's eyes were glazed. He spoke unintelligibly. I lifted the sick little old man and carried him in my arms back to Teeka. He was raving in delirium before I placed him on his cot in the powwow house, but I distinctly heard him mutter over and over:

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"It's that damned oppi, it's that damned oppi! I'm too old a man for it. If a thing ain't natural, you'd better leave it alone."

Tom's illness saddened Teeka. No one thought he would live. Aunt Cotae nursed him faithfully, and never seemed to sleep. Chief Uta mixed some herbs the Callaguaya had left on his last trip, steeped them, poured the medicine down the patient's throat. Ten Teekians were assigned to keep a death watch outside, on twenty-four-hour shifts. They groaned and chanted maddeningly, interminably.

I tried to keep old Tom warm, gave him aspirin water by the quart day after day, piled tigre hides high over his body, kept cool spring water always on hand for Aunt Cotae to rub over his face and wrists.

Tom fooled us all. His fever rose to the searing point on the seventh night of his illness, then dropped to normal before morning.

Illiacia broke the news, excitedly. She awakened me in my hut while it still was dark.

"Come quickly, Great White Callaguaya. Thy father is *returning*."

It didn't make sense. "Returning?" I asked.

"Yes, he is even now returning," she said. "He will be back very soon now."

I caught on. Tom was coming home from the land of the dead or dying. He would "arrive" on his complete recovery. Tom wouldn't die! I sprang out of my cot in a flash and ran to the sick room.

Thunder Beats the Drum!

TOM WAS PROPPED UP IN HIS COT AGAINST A WALL, SMOKING his pipe. Aunt Cotae was jubilant.

"Hi, kid," Tom said. "Do me a favor, will you, and send those damned chanting Indians home. I'll not be needing them any more."

I chased the Teekians, came back to the cot, grasped my friend's hand.

"Thank God, Tom, you're well. When you are stronger we'll be leaving for La Paz."

Tom seemed pained. "You're up to that stuff again. I'm staying."

"With my dead body, Tom. We're both getting the hell out of here, and fast."

At that moment a clap of thunder cracked and broke to pieces over the jungle, reverberated through the sound boxes of vegetables and valleys to the north and west.

"See!" Tom said triumphantly. "That's the thunder again. It's calling us to follow it. It calls loudly at first, then it whispers, but it shows the way. A man who follows the thunder won't get lost. It always shows the way."

THUNDER BEATS THE DRUM!

"That's loco talk, Tom."

"Far from it," he said. "Listen."

The thunder pealed again, rattled over the green land, looped the loop into infinity.

"It's gone north and west," Tom said, "toward the River Heath. We'll go there, kid. The thunder's got a pull. Some men can't resist it."

"Tom, you worry me. You're a sick man."

"I'm not crazy," Tom said quietly. "Thunder is heaven's tom-tom. I understand the code."

"That's poetry, Tom, but it's not true. You'd better get some rest. I'm going back to bed myself."

I left the old man, uncertain about his sanity, worried about the future, about how to handle the stubborn jungler. I was determined to leave. The thunder of civilization reverberating through canyons of bricks and mortar and steel, echoed a call to me. Manhattan has her tom-toms, too. Her thunder also beats the drum.

Five or six days later Tom was strong enough to leave. I confronted him again with my decision.

"Come on, Tom, let's get out of here, back to La Paz. I'm going. You can't stay out here by yourself. You're an old man."

"I know it," replied Tom. "That's why I'm not going back. This is my country, this red-man country. The jungle has been good to me. All it asks I can give. That's not true with La Paz, or any other town. I'm staying, kid."

"Tom, I'll tie you up, kidnap you, drag you with me."

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"I'll shoot you with a curare barb," he said, "and this time you won't have any dreams."

"I'll take my chances, Tom. Tomorrow morning we're leaving."

When I said good night to my curious old friend it was the last time I ever saw him. Next morning when I went to awaken him he had gone.

"He departed in the night, traveled in the darkness to the north," Aunt Cota explained. "He left the macho for you. He walked alone, packed his cot upon his back."

"I'll follow him," I said impulsively.

"There are many trails to the north, Great White Callaguaya. Thy father said he would take the one you would never find. Let him go his way, Great White Callaguaya, in peace."

"Aye, aye," echoed wise Chief Uta. "Let thy father go his way, in peace."

Go in peace, old Tom, go in peace! Push on to the white spots on the map. In life or death, go in peace to the City of Light!

We traveled fast, my little macho and I, pushed through kilometer after kilometer without a single unnecessary stop. We took a short cut and skirted Tipuani, purposely, to avoid meeting old friends in the crazy little village. This would have slowed us up. We trotted when possible, at a mad pace, climbed fast over the hills, and took dangerous chances in rapid descents. We traveled into the night, started again before dawn.

Day followed day in the race to gain La Paz, days in

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which there were involuntarily conjured scenes of the past, recalling everything which had gone on before. Nina Fawcett came to me in waking hours, thoughts of Chita and Donald and Frank, Carmelita, Dr. Pedro, Miss P., Scangi of the skull house, Aunt Cotaë, Sita, Copiari, Carmen and old Musa, the Callaguaya—these cropped up, some to choke me up, some to cheer me up, as I goaded my little mule to the breaking point.

Fawcett I could never get out of my mind. I lashed myself like a mental penitent over the thought that I had let him down.

Llama-driving Indians I met on the trail, I hardly noticed. "Buenos tardes, Tata," they said, or "Buenos dias, Tata."

But if I returned their greetings, I have no recollection of doing so. I raced for the soroche heights of Ancohuma's cordillera pass; and weeks later I made it.

When I reached the summit, I stood under the great wooden cross where Chita's legs were dragged raw. On the other side, a day or two away, were railroads and radios and steamships and plumbing, hospitals and news tickers. Behind me, under the swirling gray clouds which obscured that which lay to the north, was the incredible jungle. The temptation to turn back, rejoin Tom, complete unfinished business with Illiacia and keep faith with the ghost of Nina Fawcett—these things assailed me poignantly, sorrowfully.

The jungle, at that moment, might have dragged me back. But there was another pull, greater even than this. While I wavered in the soroche heights where storms

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live close to home, thunder clapped authoritatively, bounced over the peaks and whispered toward the sea.

Tom's voice from his sick cot came back to me.

"A man's got to follow the thunder," I heard him say. "The thunder's got a pull. Thunder is heaven's tomtom. Thunder, thunder, thunder," Tom said.

My thunder was whispering, leading me toward sea lanes which would take me back home again. I felt light-headed. It could have been from the dizzy heights where oxygen is rare and the mind turns thin. I know I weaved drunkenly up there on the top of the Andes, as voices came to me over and over again.

"Some men can't resist the thunder," Tom said.

"Thank you, thank you," whispered Nina Fawcett.

Somehow I made camp at a lower altitude on the other side, escaped the pull of the wild land. I was on my way. The thunder roared all that night, always echoed toward the Pacific's north-bound sea lanes.

"Thunder beats the drum!"

Before I went to bed I stood under the patchy clouds, counted the stars in the Southern Cross, saw the moon for a moment and remembered a long-forgotten poem:

"Into the sunset's turquoise marge
The moon dips like a pearly barge.
Enchantment sails on magic seas
To fairyland's Hesperides."

Tom, wherever he was, would be seeing the skidding moon that night in crude surroundings. Fawcett, in his

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fairyland garden of Eden, on a throne of gold, might be looking at it even now.

I wished crazily for a moment that the moon could talk. I wanted to send the explorer a message. It would have been this:

“Hold on, Fawcett, *Tom* will be there!”

Remember that my camp was pitched in the basement of the stratosphere, where the mind gets very thin, and things easily become distorted. I was angry at myself. Hot tears scorched my cheeks. I gripped Chita's counterfeit silver dollar in the palm of my right hand so hard it cut through the skin.

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